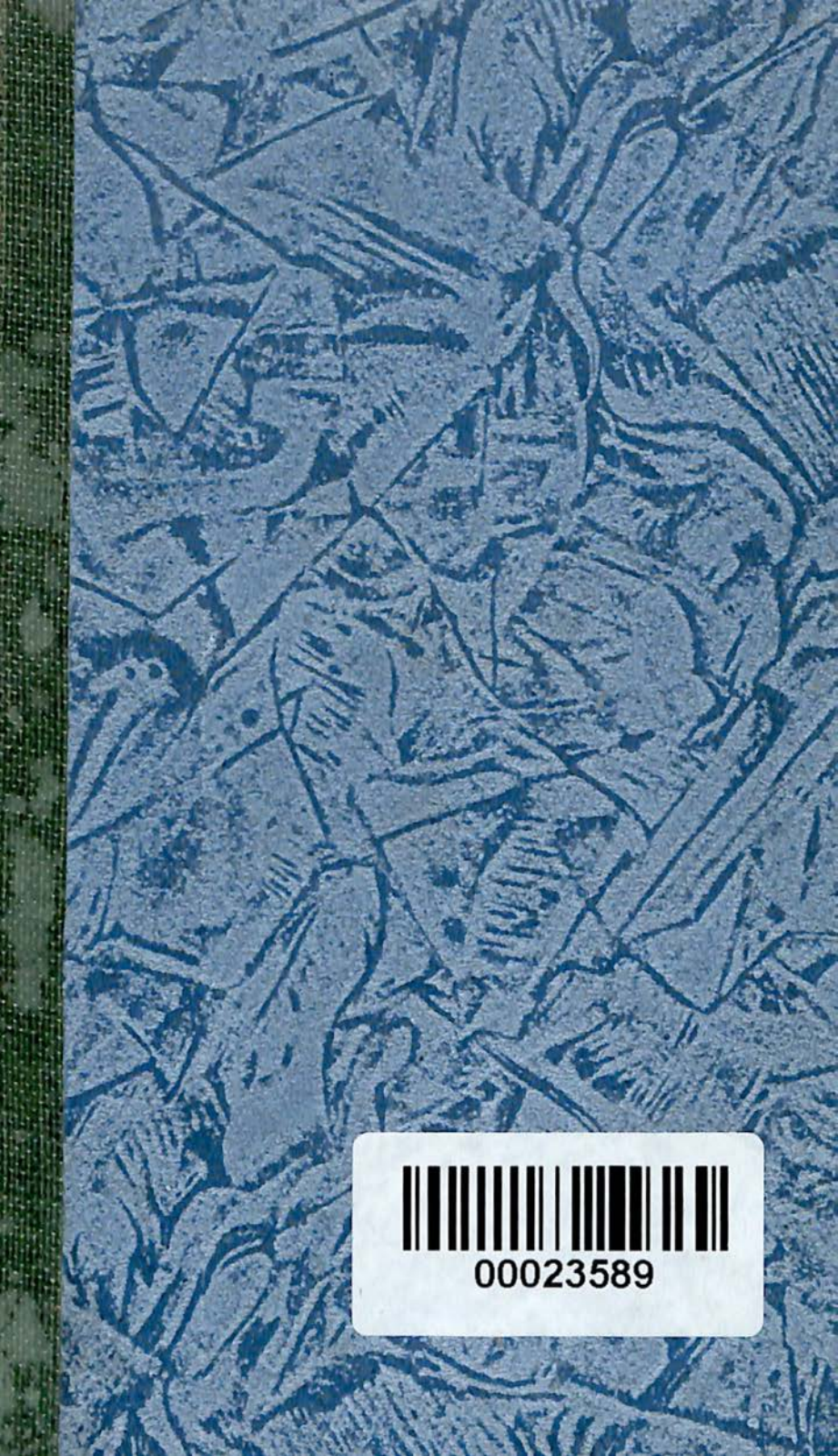
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A Critical Examination

OF

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS

OF

MOHAMMED,

BY

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"Sakhun kaz bahr dîn goï chè Ibrânî chè Suryânî,
Makân kaz bahr Hak joï chè Jâbalkâ chè Jâbalsâ."

"What matters it whether the words thou utterest for religion are Hebrew or Syrian; or whether the place in which thou seekest for Truth is Jâbalkâ or Jâbalsâ."—*Sanâï.*

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,
14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;
AND 2, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.
1873.

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THIS BOOK,

WHICH I HAD HOPED TO INSCRIBE TO MY BROTHER,

SYED WARIS ALI KHAN BAHADOOR,

OF ARRAH,

THE GUARDIAN OF MY YOUTH,

THE DEAREST FRIEND OF MY WHOLE LIFE,

I NOW SORROWFULLY DEDICATE

To his beloved Memory.

PREFACE.

Among the moral teachers of the world, Mohammed occupies the most historic position. He is pre-eminently the last of the prophets. The education and progress of the world, as represented by individual teachers, which commenced in the hazy past on the table-lands of Bactria, closed in historic times among the hills and valleys of Hijâz. Thenceforth, the progress of the world, morally and intellectually, is collective; the days of Sakya-Mûni, Zoroaster, and the prophets and apostles are over. Mohammed's life and teachings have naturally furnished to the sectarians of rival creeds an open object for their attacks. But though the race of Spànheim, Prideaux, and D'Herbelot is not extinct, yet the gradual enlightenment of the human mind is shown strikingly in the silent change which is taking place in Christendom towards a more liberal conception of the grand work achieved by the Arabian prophet in the seventh century. Maurice, Stanley and Carlyle in England, Emerson, Parker, Channing and Draper in America—each representing a varied school of thought, have testified as the result of

earnest study that Islâm, instead of the evil names heaped upon it, merits the thanks of humanity. In this gradual enlightenment, in this communion of sympathy—lies the hope of those great minds who look forward to the final commingling of sects and creeds in one universal brotherhood.

The history of the Prophet of Arabia has been written by friends as well as foes. Weil, Sprenger, Noldeke, Caussin de Perceval, Muir, Dozy and various others occupy the highest position in the Western world as historians of Islâm. With the exception, however, of Caussin de Perceval and Dozy, all these writers have had some especial theory of their own to prove.

Sprenger has over-loaded his work with a pseudo-philosophy which oftentimes becomes wearying. In his laboured comparison between Mohammed and Swedenborg; in his learned disquisition on hysteria, in which the historian is lost in the pedant; in his strictures on the nature of Mohammed's denunciations against the superstitious practices of the Arabs, —(strictures which, if applied to Mohammed, might be equally applied to the other teachers, if judged from the stand-point of a modern sophist)—we can distinctly perceive his bias against Islâm, in spite of all attempts to appear impartial and critical. One of the most serious defects in this otherwise extraordinary work consists in the curious though ingenious way in which the balance is held between the genuine

and the apocryphal, with an evident leaning towards the latter.

Muir's life of Mohammed has not the fault of being over-philosophical, and possesses the merit of real earnestness. For this reason, it claims greater attention from the Moslems, and requires a refutation of every false theory and apocryphal story stated in it. The motive, however, with which this work was undertaken, would lead impartial minds to doubt the author's perfect freedom from bias against Islâm. He has candidly admitted in his preface it was undertaken to help a Christian missionary in his controversial war with the Moslems in India.

Muir and Sprenger have both constructed their histories mainly on the writings of two Moslem authors (Wâkidi and his Kâtib), regarded in the Mohammedan world as the least trustworthy and most careless biographers of Mohammed. Of the former, Ibn Khallicân speaks thus:—"The traditions received from him (Wâkidi) are considered of feeble authority, and doubts have been expressed on the subject of his veracity."—Vol. iii. p. 62.

The most learned, impartial, and in every way the best work written by an European on the early history of Islâm is that by Caussin de Perceval. If the historian has no sympathy, he has at least no prejudice. He has no abuse for Mohammed and his followers; and although he does not fully recognise the exigencies of the times, yet he is candid

enough not to bring any specious sophistry, inapplicable canon or pre-conceived theory, to judge of events which occurred among a people and in an age utterly different from our own.

There is another work in French of which I cannot speak too highly. The History of the Arabs, by Sédillot, is a comprehensive, appreciative, and unbiassed contribution towards a full record of the part the Moslems have played in the world. My co-religionists also owe their deepest obligation to Oelsner, Deutsch, Barthelemy St. Hilaire, Davenport, Higgins and Carlyle for their attempts to free Islâm from the abuses of its ecclesiastical enemies.

In the following pages, my object has been to embody the principal features of the life and teachings of the Arabian Prophet in a popular shape; to disabuse the minds of many readers of false impressions and false prejudices; to try and prove that Islâm has been a real blessing to mankind; that *it* also has helped to elevate Humanity, as Christianity partially did before;—that, in fact, it is one of those manifestations of Divine Wisdom by which the Universal Father leads us on towards the final object of our existence. I have stated my views frankly, and claim from those of my readers who may differ from me, the indulgence always accorded to outspokenness. The authorities I have consulted have been carefully (and to some they may seem, pedantically) referred to in the work,—for in a writing of the kind I now place

in the hands of the public, it is often better to err on the safer side—to be too exact in quoting authorities than too remiss.

My sketch of the life of Mohammed is mainly constructed on the writings of Ibn-Hishâm and Ibn-al-Athîr. The former, in spite of the animadversions of Muir, will always continue to occupy the position of the most careful and trustworthy biographer of the Prophet. The latter, for his critical acumen, the simple and chaste elegance of his style, and the extensive erudition displayed throughout his splendid history, might justly claim a place in the rank of the greatest historians of Europe.

On the eve of my departure for my country (though with an earnest hope of returning) I trust it will not be considered inappropriate in me to conclude this preface with a personal observation. Nowhere have I found people more genial or more hospitable than in England. High and low have invariably treated me with courtesy and kindness, and the cold reserve I have read of in books, I have never met with in my real experience. In England, I have formed many deep and, I believe, lasting friendships, while the affection with which I regard this country has only increased my devotion to my own.

To those friends, acquaintances, and even strangers who have shown me kindness during my visit here, I offer my sincere thanks. I also avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep obligation to those

kind friends who have assisted me in many ways in the preparation of these pages, and to Dr. Röst and Mr. R. C. Childers for their courtesy in allowing me the free use of the literary treasures in the India Office Library.

Inner Temple, January, 1873.

Note.—The sounds of the vowels are expressed as follows :—

a as *u* in but,
â as aa in Baal,
e as e in let,
î as ee in seen,
o as ow in bowl,
u as u in put,
û as u in pool.

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ERRATA.

Page 4, note, *for* Brahmanism *read* Brahmism.
13, line 6, *for* form *read* forms.
39, last line, *for* lost *read* least.
64, last line, *for* he *read* He.
71, last line but one, *for* his *read* His.
89, last line, *dele* after Cremera.
150, note †, *for* Josua *read* Joshua.
183, line 17, *for* 4 *read* 5.
187, line 23, *for* has *read* have.
217, lines 4, 5, and 7, *for* is *read* was.
220, line 22, *for* where *read* when.
274, line 11, *for* delicious *read* delightful.
315, line 25, *for* Prologomènes *read* Prolégomènes.

CHAPTER I.

In order to appreciate thoroughly the achievement of Mohammed in the moral world, it is necessary we should take a rapid survey of the religious and social condition of the nations of the earth about the time of the Islamic dispensation. For we must fully recognise that the causes which had led to the advent of the Great Prophet of Nazareth, in the reign of Augustus, acted with greater force during the reigns of the degenerate emperors who occupied the throne of the Cæsars,* at the period of Mohammed's appearance.

In the dim twilight of history we see, or fancy we see, strange figures and strange scenes enacted on the high table land of Bactria, appropriately styled "the mother of countries."† Several clans are gathered together on that plateau; just emerged from savageness into barbarism, they are becoming

* Justin II. ruled at Byzantium and Kesrâ Anushirván at Ctesiphon (Madâin).

† Arab geographers call Bactria (Balkh) *Um-ul-Bilâd*, "mother of countries."

alive to the sense of an Universal Ideality. Innumerable idealities are taking the place of the natural objects, hitherto worshipped with fear and trembling. With some of these ancient dwellers on the earth the host of abstractions and personifications of the powers of Nature are subordinated to two comprehensive Principles: Light and Darkness. The sun, the bright harbinger of life and light, becomes the symbol of a beneficent Divinity, whose power, though held in check, is eventually to conquer the opposing principle of Evil and Darkness. With others, the idealities which they now impress on the fetish they worshipped before, merge in each other; at one time standing forth as distinct personal entities, at another time resolving themselves into a hylozoic whole.*

Through the darkness which yet shrouds this primeval home of mankind, we can see the dim traces of a religious conflict between the two divisions of the Aryan family, which has left its mark in the deep imprecations heaped by the Vedic hymn-singer on the head of the half mythic, half historical Persic hero, Djaradashti of the Vedas, the first Azar and Zardahusht of the Iranians.† The western dualistic clans are successful, and drive their half polytheistic, half pantheistic brethren

* Comp. Talboys Wheeler, Hist. of India (Vedic period), vol. i. p. 8.

† Comp. Lenormant's Ancient Hist. of the East, vol. ii. p. 38.

across the Paropamisadae. The darkness which hitherto enshrouded the homes of our ancestors, now clears a little; we see the Eastern Aryans burst into India, driving before them the black aboriginal races; massacring and enslaving them.* History repeats itself strangely!

The tide of Aryan conquest continued flowing eastward and southward for centuries. The Aryan colonies were naturally acted upon by the fetishism of the races whom they conquered or among whom they settled; until at last the gross inhuman Sakti worship was produced on the one hand, and the degrading sensualism of Krishna on the other.† In the parts, however, which formed the core of the Aryan nation, the thoughts and feelings brought from their native home continued for ages to exercise an influence. But soon they were to lose what remained. In the enjoyment of peace and plenty, cut off from the energetic life of their brothers of the West, always exposed to the voluptuous influences of a morbidly fertile imagination, and without possessing a system of positive morality embodied in effectual laws, the Aryan settlers lost the spiritual belief of their forefathers.

They indeed obtained a code; but it represented the ideas which prevailed in an age of gross materialism.

* Comp. Talboys Wheeler's History of India, p. 32.

† *Ibid*, p. 391, *et seq.*

A revolt ensued, arising from revolutionary and negative instincts acting on one Hindu mind. But Buddhism, with all its grand aspirations, never pretended to be a religion. Essentially adapted to the recluse, it never acquired a tangible hold on the masses; and its failure under the most favourable circumstances sealed its fate in India as a religious system.*

On the expulsion of Buddhism from Hindustan, Brahmanism regained its supremacy. The temples became the haunts of debauchery and crimes. Immorality was sanctioned by religion. The demons of destruction and lust became the two favourite objects of popular worship. The revolting orgies of Ashtaroth and Moloch were enacted, under other names and aspects.

So much for the religious life of the people.

The social life of the masses was miserable beyond conception. The condition of woman, even during that vague and mythic period which passes under the name of the Vedic age, was not so favourable as some writers on India would fain represent to us now. She formed the prize in gambling and feats of athletics.† She was the drudge of the house,

* Comp. Hunter, Annals of Rural Bengal, in loco, and also my letters signed "Alpha" in "The Asiatic," on the difference between Buddhism and Brahmanism; also, Wheeler, Hist. of India, vol. i. pp. 158, 159.

† Comp. La Femme dans l'Inde Antique, par Mlle. Bader, p. 86, and Wheeler's Hist. of India, vol. i. pp. 178-182.

and had to accept as many husbands as there were brothers in the family. But she arrived at the depth of degradation under Brahmanic domination. The contempt with which the Brahmanic legislator speaks of women, and the complete servitude to which he subjects them are astounding beyond expression.*

In describing the religious condition of Persia, the empire of the great Chosroes, we have to enter into more minute details. The proximity of the country to the birthplace of Islâm and the powerful influence it has always exercised on Mahommedan thought, not to speak of the character and tone it communicated to Christianity and Judaism, make Persia a most important object of study.

The Aryan race had split into two sections by the migration of one branch across the Paropamisadae; and of the other, towards the great settlements of their Semitic brethren.

* Thonissen, l'Histoire du Droit Criminel des Peuples Anciens (Paris, 1869), vol. i. p. 27, note.

Observe also the various ordinances of the Brahmanic legislator on this subject. "Women," says Manu, "love their beds, their seats, their ornaments; they have impure appetites; they love wrath; they show weak flexibility and bad conduct. Day and night women must be kept in subjection."—Tytler's Considerations on the State of India, vol. i. p. 237.

Also, La Femme dans l'Inde Antique, in loco.

As to the condition of the low castes, Sudra, Pariahs, &c., a mere glance over the pages of Thonissen's splendid work is enough to fill one with disgust.

As in the Eastern branch, so also among the Western Aryans,the idea of divinity had acquired a degree of consistency and definiteness, probably under the hands of some heaven-inspired genius. The same influences, however, which led to the degradation of the Indo-Aryans, were rife among the Iranians. They had either displaced or subjugated the old Turanian tribes who had preceded them in the work of colonization, and the extreme materialism of these Turanians did not fail to degrade the yet undeveloped idealism of their Iranian neighbours. The frequent contact of the followers of Afrasiâb and Kai-kâûs, in the field and the hall, exercised a lasting effect on the Persic faith. The complex system of celestial co-ordination which was prevalent among the Assyrians,* also left its mark on the Iranians, under the domination of the Peshdadian or Perso-Assyrian sovereigns. Under these influences, the Western Aryans soon found the level of their neighbours. The symbolical

* Comp. Rawlinson, Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient World, vol. ii. pp. 230-234; also the curious translation of an Assyrian inscription in Lenormant's Anc. History of the East, vol. i. p. 42. According to Professor Rawlinson and other great scholars, the Assyrians seem to have at first entertained a distinct idea of a celestial hierarchy, almost rising to a monotheistic conception (Rawlinson, vol. ii. p. 23 et seq.; Lenormant, vol. i. p. 452). If so, the depravation of ideas which resulted from material progress and contact with inferior races, must have led to the revolt of Abraham.

worship probably in vogue among the early emigrants, became degraded into pyrolatry.

The captivity of the Hebraic tribes and their long exile near the seats of Persian domination, most probably gave impetus to that religious reform which occurred during the reign of Darius Hystaspes. There was mutual action and reaction. The Israelites impressed on renovated Zoroastrianism a deep and abiding conception of a Divine Personality overshadowing the universe. They received from the Iranians the conception of a celestial hierarchy, and the idea of a duality of principles in the creation of good and evil. Thenceforth it is not the Lord who puts a lying spirit into the mouths of evil-doers;* Satan, like Ahriman, from this time takes a prominent part in the religious and moral history of the Hebrews.

The reforms effected by the historic Zoroaster, under Darius Hystaspes,† seem to have continued in full force for some centuries. But his religion at last met with the fate which appears to be the end of every system which does not possess the homogeneity, the practicality, the human sympathy amongst

* 1 Kings xxii. 21-23.

† According to the Dabistân, Ibn-al-Athîr calls this monarch, Bishtâsp, son of Lohrâsp, and the account he gives of the life of Zoroaster (Zardasht) is curious, as bearing a strange analogy to the modern discoveries from the inscriptions, especially as to his connection with Bactria (Balkh), pp. 180, 191 et seq. Comp. Lenormant, vol. ii. p. 25.

its professors, the absence of all esoteric feelings, which is needful for an universal creed. The swarms of conquerors, who passed like a whirlwind over the face of that beautiful country before the time of Mohammed, destroyed all social and moral life. The Macedonian conquest with the motley hordes which followed on its footsteps; the influx of all the dregs of Lesser Asia, Cilicians, Tyrians, Pamphylians, and various others, half Greeks half Asians, obeying no moral law; the hasty and reckless temper of the conqueror himself, all led to the debasement of the pure Zoroastrian faith. The Mobeds, the representatives of the national life, were placed under the ban of persecution by the drunken foreigner,* the aim of whose life was to hellenize Asia. Under the Seleucidæ, the process of denationalization went on apace. Antiochus Epiphanes, the man who hated the monotheistic Jews, was not likely to allow the idealistic Zoroastrians to remain in peace. Even the rise of the Parthian dynasty tended to accelerate the ruin and decline of Zoroastrianism. In settled and quiet parts

* The burning of Susa by Alexander the Macedonian, after a drunken orgie, led to the destruction of the religious works of Persia, which according to Tabari (Tibrî) and Abû-Mohammed Mustafâ (author of a history of Gushtâsp, Darius Hystaspes) used to be deposited in the royal archives of Susa and Persepolis; also Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. i. p. 182. As to the cruel character of Alexander, comp. Kitâb-Târîkh-Sanní Mulûk-ul-Ardh (Annals of the Sovereigns of the Earth), by Hamzâ Isphahânî, Ar. p. 41; Lat. p. 28.

it became mixed with the old Sabæism of the Medes and the Chaldeans, or, where kept alive in its pristine character, it was confined to the hearts of some of those priests who had taken refuge in the inaccessible recesses of their country. Last sad representatives of a dying faith! Around them clustered the hopes of a renovated religious existence under the auspices of the Sassanide dynasty. How far the brilliant aspirations of Ardishîr Babekân (Artaxerxes Longimanus), the founder of the new empire, were realized is a matter of history. The political autonomy of Persia, its national life, was restored; but the social and religious life were lost beyond the power of rulers to restore. The teachings of yore lived perhaps in books; but in the hearts of the people, they were as dead as old Gushtâsp or Rustam. The degradation was already complete when Artaxerxes Mnêmon (Bahman Ardishîr*) introduced among the Persians the worship of that androgynous being Mithra, the Persian counterpart of the Chaldean Mylitta or Anaitis, and the concomitant phallic cultus.† The climax was reached when Mazdak, in the beginning of the sixth century of the Christian era "bade all men to be partners in riches and women, just as they are in fire, water and grass;

* Tarîkh-i-Hamzâ Isphahânî, p. 46; Ibn-al-Athîr (vol. ii. p. 285) and the Habîb-us-Siyar. Artaxerxes Mnêmon was the brother of Cyrus the younger, the hero of Xenophon.

† Lenormant, Ancient Hist. of the East, vol. ii. pp. 45, 46.

private property was not to exist; each man was to enjoy or endure the good and bad lots of this world."* The lawfulness of marriage with sisters and other blood-relations had already been recognised by Mago-Zoroastrianism.† The proclamation of this frightful communism revolted some of the nobler minds, even among the Persians. The successor of Zoroaster, as Mazdak styled himself, was put to death; but his doctrines had taken root, and from Persia they spread over the West.‡

All these evils betokened a frightful depravation of moral life and foreshadowed the speedy extinction of the nation in its own iniquities. This doom, though staved off for a time by the personal character of Kesrâ Anushirvân, after his death became more and more inevitable. But a Master had already appeared, destined to change the whole aspect of the world.

The series of disasters which one after another had befallen the doomed nation of Moses had culminated in the wars of Titus and of Hadrian.§

* Dabistân (English Transl.) Prel. Discourse, p. civ.; comp. also Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. i. p. 148; Tabari (Zotenberg's Transl.), vol. ii. p. 148; Habîb-us-Siyar, and Malcolm's Hist. of Persia, p. 104.

† As among the ancient Egyptians.

‡ Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. iv. chap. xlii. p. 88 and note.

§ Besides the Christian historians and Josephus, I may refer the curious to Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. i. p. 229; Târîkh-i-Hamzâ Isphahânî, pp. 72-73.

The house of Israel was a total wreck; its members were fugitives on the face of the earth, seeking shelter far and wide, but carrying everywhere their indomitable pride, their rebellious hardness of heart, denounced and reprehended by an endless succession of Prophets. The Jews, in their safe retreats in foreign lands, re-enacted the scenes of past times.* The nation lived in hope, but the hope was mixed with rigid uncompromising bigotry on the one hand and a voluptuous epicureanism on the other. Jesus had come and gone, without producing much visible effect upon them. The Child of his age, he came as the messenger of universal brotherhood and love. In the midst of a proud and exclusive race, he trod the paths of humility and mildness; kind and gentle to his immediate followers, devoted to the cause of all, he left behind him the impress of an elevated self-denying spirit. The want of firmness such as had enabled Moses to strike awe into the hearts of a backsliding rebellious race, made Jesus a victim to the vengeance of the vested interests of his day.

The greatest and by far the most gifted of the disciples of Jesus, was Paul. In spite of the promise attached to the "effusion of the Holy Ghost," it was

* The scenes of rioting in the streets of Alexandria must be familiar to every reader of Kingsley's Hypatia. But in these cases the Christians were the aggressors. A better example is afforded by the history of the Jewish tribes in Arabia.

found necessary that there should be "some one defender of the Gospel who, versed in the learned arts, might be able to combat the Jewish doctors and the pagan philosophers with their own arms. For this purpose Jesus himself, by an extraordinary voice from heaven, had called to His service a thirteenth apostle, whose name was Saul (afterwards Paul), and whose acquaintance both with Jewish and Grecian learning was very considerable,"* in which the other apostles were sadly wanting. St. Paul indeed did wonders for the Christian Church. He infused into the simple teachings of his Master the most mysterious principles of Neopythagoreanism, with its doctrine of intelligences, and its notion of the triad, borrowed from the far East.

The jealousy between the home and the foreign, the Judaical and the anti-Judaical party, was shown in the curious though well-known antipathy of the two Apostles, Peter and Paul.† The Ebionites most probably represented the beliefs of the original companions of the prophet Jesus. He had conversed with them familiarly, and "in all the actions of rational and animal life," had appeared to them as of the same nature as themselves. They had marked him grow from infancy to youth and from youth to manhood; they had seen him increase in stature and wisdom. Their

* Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 63.

† Milner, Hist. of the Church of Christ, vol. i. pp. 26, 27.

belief was tempered by their knowledge of him as a man. The depravation of ideas from this original faith, through various intermediate phases like those of the Docetes, the Marcionites, the Patripassians* and various others, to the decisions of the Council of Nice in 328, form a continuous chain. The strangers who had never beheld the manhood, could easily embrace the divinity of Jesus, to which, whether polytheists or philosophers, Greeks or Barbarians, they were already predisposed by their belief, in æons and emanations.

With the apparent conversion of Constantine, Christianity became the dominant power in the Roman Empire. The fate of paganism was sealed. Its downfall, though staved off for a time by the greatest and most sincere of the Roman emperors, had become inevitable. "After the extinction of paganism," says Gibbon, "the Christians, in peace and piety, might have enjoyed their solitary triumph. But the principle of discord was alive in their bosom, and they were more solicitous to explore the nature than to practise the laws of their founder."†

* The Docetes believed Jesus to be a pure God. The Marcionites regarded him as a being "most like unto God, even his Son Jesus Christ, clothed with a certain shadowy resemblance of a body, that he might thus be visible to mortal eyes." The Patripassians believed that the Father suffered with the Son on the cross. (Mosheim and Gibbon, in loco., and Neander, vol. ii. pp. 150, 301 et seq.)

† Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. iv. chap. 48, p. 328.

We have no heart to enter into the details of their intestine quarrels; their murders,* their massacres; the fulsomeness of the language in which they wrangled about the nature of their great Teacher, and of his mother; the terrible denunciations they heaped on each other; we have no heart to dilate upon the dark deeds practised in the court of Byzantium under the sanction of the Church; nor is there any need to do more than merely direct the attention to the quarrels of the monophysites and the monothelites, or to the questions that rent the Christian world with the darkest of all passions, the passion which animates all monopolists, whether spiritual or temporal. Suffice it for us to give a summary of the Christianity of those days in the words of an apologist and a Christian.

"The Bishop of Constantinople was the passive victim, the humble slave, or the factious adversary of the Byzantine Emperor: rarely exercised a lofty moral control upon his despotism. The lower clergy, whatever their more secret beneficent or sanctifying workings on society, had sufficient power, wealth and rank, to tempt ambition or to degrade

* The murder of the best, the gentlest and one of the most beautiful women of the ancient world, by a man who bears the name of saint in Christendom, and who has found an apologist (see Kingsley's Hypatia) in modern times, is the darkest blot on Christianity. The eloquent pages of Draper (Hist. of the Intellectual Development of Europe, vol. i. pp. 310-314) offer a glorious tribute to the memory of the martyred Hypatia.

to intrigue; not enough to command the public mind for any great salutary purpose; to repress the inveterate immorality of an effete age; to reconcile jarring interests, to mould together hostile races: in general they ruled, when they did rule, by the superstitious fears, rather than by the reverence and attachment of a grateful people. They sank downward into the common ignorance, and yielded to that worst barbarism—a worn-out civilisation. Monasticism withdrew a great number of those who might have been energetic and useful citizens, into barren seclusion and religious indolence; but except when the monks formed themselves, as they frequently did, into fierce political or polemic factions, they had little effect on the condition of society. They stood aloof from the world—the anchorites in their desert wildernesses, the monks in their jealously-barred convents; and secure, as they supposed, of their own salvation, left the rest of mankind to inevitable perdition."*

Lawlessness was thus the order of the day among the Christians. Instead of taking an example from the lessons of piety, gentleness and humanity inculcated by their great Master, they were animated by the fiercest animosity against each other and against the outside world.

The countries included in Asiatic Turkey westward of the Euphrates, devastated alternately by the

* Milman, Hist. of Latin Christianity, vol. i. Introd. p. 4.

Parthians and the Romans and then by the Persians and the Byzantines, presented a scene of utter desolation. The moral misery of the people was surpassed by their social ruin. The followers of Jesus, instead of alleviating, intensified the evil. Mago-Zoroastrianism combating with a degraded Christianity in Mæsopotamia; the Nestorians engaged in deadly conflict with the orthodox party, the earlier contests of Montanus and the prophetesses, had converted Western Asia into a frightful Aceldama.

The whirlwinds of conquest which had passed over Africa; the massacres, the murders, the lawlessness of the professors and teachers of the Christian religion, had destroyed every spark of moral life in Egypt and in the African provinces of the decaying empire. In Europe the condition of the people was, if possible, even more miserable. In broad day, under the eyes of the ministers of religion and the people, Narses, the benefactor of his country, was burnt alive in the market-place of Constantinople.* In the streets of Rome, under the eyes of the Exarch, the partisans of rival bishops waged war, and deluged churches with the blood of Christians.†

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. iv. chap. 46, p. 303.

† Christian sentimentalists cannot find words sufficiently strong to express their horror at the presence of a Moslem in the city of Con-

The Jews, chased successively from their native homes by the Assyrians, the Greeks and the Romans, had found among the Arabs safety and protection. But they had brought with their religion the bitter spirit of strife which had caused perhaps the greater portion of their misfortunes. The Nestorians and the Jacobite Christians had also founded colonies in Arabia. The deadly rivalry between these two creeds to dominate over Arabia occasioned sanguinary wars in the most fertile provinces.* Magism and Sabæism had also their representatives among the Arabs, and especially among the Himyarites. But the majority of the people were addicted to fetishism of the grossest type. Animals and plants, the gazelle, the horse, the camel, the palm-tree, inorganic matter like pieces of rock, stones, &c. formed the principal objects of adoration. The idea of a Supreme Divinity, however, was not unrecognised; but its influence was confined to an inappreciable

stantine the hypocrite. They would rather see a Narses burnt in the market-place of Constantinople; they would rather see an emperor and his family, wife and innocent children put to death with frightful tortures; they would rather see a pure woman torn to pieces by howling monks in the streets of Alexandria, than see a quiet staid Mahommedan rule the polluted city of Phocas and Theodora.

* Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. i. p. 308, *et seq.*

Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. iv. pp. 114, 115; Caussin de Perceval, Hist. des Arabes, vol. i. pp. 128-131.

few who, escaping from the bondage of idolatry, betook themselves to a philosophical scepticism more or less tinged with the legendary notions, religious and secular, of their neighbours the Sabeans, the Jews, or the Christians. Among these, some distinctly recognised the conception of a supreme Godhead,* and, revolting at the gross materialism of their day, waited patiently for the appearance of a Deliverer who, they felt convinced in their hearts, would soon appear.

Whether the introduction of idolatry in Mecca was late† or ancient is wholly irrelevant to the question. The broad fact remains that idolatry was deep-rooted among the Arabs.

Human sacrifices were frequent. Each tribe had its particular idols and particular temples; and often there used to arise sanguinary conflicts between the followers or the worshippers of rival temples.‡ But the prestige of the Kaaba stood unimpeached among all.§ Even the Jews and the Sabeans sent offerings there. The custody of this

* The number and generally the influence of these have been carefully collected by Sprenger, Band I. p. 13, *et seq.*, to show that Islâm existed before Mohammed; just in the way, I should say, as Christianity existed before Jesus.

† Comp. Shahrastânî, p. 430. (Cureton's Ed.)

‡ Lenormant, Anc. History of the East, vol. ii. pp. 323 and 350; Shahrastânî, p. 431.

§ Caussin de Perceval, Histoire des Arabes, vol. i. p. 269-270.

temple was an object of great jealousy among the tribes, as it conferred on the custodians the most honourable functions and privileges in the sight of the Arabs. At the time of Mohammed's birth, this honour was possessed by his family, and his grandfather was the venerable chief of the theocratic commonwealth which was constituted round the Kaaba.

Such was the moral and religious condition of the Arabs. Neither Christianity nor Judaism had succeeded in raising them in the scale of humanity. "After five centuries of Christian evangelisation," says Muir, "we can point to but a sprinkling here and there of Christians;—the Bani Hârith of Najran; the Bani Hanîfa of Yemâma; some of the Bani Tay at Tayma; and hardly any more. Judaism, vastly more powerful, had exhibited a spasmodic effort of proselytism under Dzu Nowâs; but, as an active and converting agent, the Jewish Faith was no longer operative. In fine, viewed thus in a religious aspect, the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the feeble efforts of Christianity; the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current; but the tide of indigenous idolatry and of Ishmaelite superstition, setting from every quarter with an unbroken and unebbing surge towards the Kaaba, gave ample evidence that the

faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind in a thraldom, rigorous and undisputed."*

Politically, the divisions and jealousies of the tribes, combined with the antagonistic feelings which actuated one against the other from religious and race-differences, had enabled the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Persians and the Abyssinians to become masters of various provinces in the North, in the East, and in the South-West. The Abyssinians had even gone so far as to invade Hijâz with the intention of destroying the national temple. But their power was broken before Mecca by the sturdy patriotism of Abd-ul-Muttalib. After twenty years' oppression, they were driven out of Yemen by a native prince, the celebrated Saif, son of Dhu'l-yezen, with the assistance of Persia. On his assassination by the Christians, the sovereignty he had enjoyed under the auspices of the great Anûshirvân passed entirely into Persian hands, and Yemen became tributary to Persia.†

Besides the direct domination which the rival empires of Constantinople and Ctesiphon exercised over the various provinces of Arabia, two of the greatest chieftains, the kings of Ghassân and of Hira, divided their allegiance between the Cæsar and

* Muir, vol. i. Introd. p. ccxxxix.

† Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. i. pp. 324, 327; Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. p. 138 *et seq.* Tabari (Zotenberg's Transl.) vol. ii. pp. 217-218.

the Chosroes; and in the deadly wars, profitless and aimless, which Persian and Byzantine waged against each other, sucking out the life-blood of their people from mere lust of destruction, though oftener the right was on the side of the Zoroastrian than the Christian,* the Ghassanide and Hirite stood face to face in hostile array, or locked in mortal combat.

The heterogeneous elements of which the Arabian peninsula was thus composed gave an extremely varied character to the folk-lore of the country. Among uncultured nations, the tendency always is to dress facts in the garb of legends. Imagination among them not only lends enchantment to the view, but magnifies distant objects. And the variety of culture multiplies legends, more or less based on facts. The Hamitic colonies of Yemen and of the south-west generally; the true Semites who followed in their footsteps, like the Aryans in the East; the Jews, the Christians, all brought their traditions, their myths, their legends with them. In the course of ages, these relics of the Past acquired a consistency and a character; but however unsubstantial in appearance, on analysis there is always to be found underlying them a stratum of fact. In the

* Especially in the terrible chastisement Khusrọ Parvîz inflicted on the Byzantines for the atrocious murder of their Emperor, *his* benefactor, Maurice, and his children and wife: see Gibbon, vol. iv. pp. 302-304.

legend of Sheddâd and his garden of Irem, we see in the hazy Past the reflexion of a mighty empire, which even conquered Egypt,—"of a wealthy nation, constructors of great buildings, with an advanced civilisation analogous to that of Chaldæa, professing a religion similar to the Babylonian; a nation in short, with whom material progress was allied to great moral depravity and obscene rites."* In the traditional, half-legendary, half-historic destruction of the Adites and the Thamûdites, we see the destructive fate which overwhelmed these Hamitic races before the Semitic tide, Assyrian and Arab.†

* Lenormant, Ancient Hist. of the East, vol. ii. p. 296.

† The Adites are said to have been overwhelmed, conquered and destroyed by the Joktanite Arabs; the Thamûdites, "that strange race of Troglodytes," by the Assyrians under Chedorlaomer (Ḳodâr-al-ahmar). The Arabs themselves divided the races who have peopled the Peninsula into three grand sub-divisions, viz. (1) the *Arab-ul-Bâidah*, the extinct Arabs, under which are included the Hamitic colonies (Cushites) which preceded the Semites in the work of colonization, as also the Aramæan populations of Syria, Phœnicia, and other parts; (2) the *Arab-ul-Ariba*, or *Mutayriba*, original Arabs, true Semites, whom tradition represents to be descended from Kahtân, or Joktan, and who, in their progress towards the south, destroyed the aboriginal settlers. The Joktanite Arabs, nomades by nature, superimposed themselves in those countries on the primitive inhabitants, the Hamitic astral-worshippers. Their original cradle was a region whence also came the Abrahamites, and is precisely indicated by the significant names of two of the direct ancestors of Joktan, Arphaxad, "border of the Chaldæan," and Eber, "the man from beyond [the river,]" in reference to Babylon, or the district now

The children of Jacob, flying from their ruthless enemies, brought their legends and traditions with them, and thus furnished their quota to the folk-lore of the peninsula. The last of the Semitic colonies who had entered Arabia were recognised by themselves as well as their neighbours as descended from Abraham; and tradition had handed down this belief and given it a shape and a character.

Manicheism, stamped out from Persia and the Byzantine dominions, had betaken itself to Arabia.* The early Docetes, the Marcionites, the Valentinians, all had their representatives in this land of freedom. They all disseminated their views and traditions, which in course of time became intermixed with the traditions of the country. These Christians, more consistent in their views than their orthodox persecutors, believed that the God incarnate, or at least the Son of God, His Word, born in the bosom of eternity, an Æon, an Emanation issuing from the Throne of Light, could not, did not die on the

called Irâk-Araby, on the right bank of the Euphrates.—Lenormant, Anc. Hist. of the East, vol. ii. p. 293. (3) The *Arab-ul-Mustariba*, "or naturalised Arabs," Abrahamitic Semites who, either as peaceful immigrants, or as military colonists, introduced themselves into the Peninsula, and who intermarried and settled among the Joktanite Arabs.—Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. i. pp. 55-58; Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. p. 5, *et seq.*; Syed Ahmed, Essays on the Life of Mohammed, Ess. I. p. 12, *et seq.*

* Beausobre, Hist. du Manicheisme, Pt. I. l. II. chap. iv.

The author of the Habîb-us-Siyar gives a beautiful, though rather exaggerated, account of the destruction of Manicheism in Persia.

cross; that the words of agony which orthodox Christian traditions put into the mouth of Jesus, did not, and could not escape from his lips; in short, that the man who suffered on the cross was a different person from the Divine Christ who escaped from the hands of his persecutors and went away to the regions whence he had come.* This doctrine, however fanciful, was more consistent with the idea of the Sonship of Jesus;† and in itself appears to have been based on some strong probabilities. The intense desire of Pilate, whom Tertullian calls a Christian at heart, to save Jesus,‡ even the unwillingness of Herod to incur more odium by the murder of the blessed prophet of Nazareth; the darkness of the short hours when that great benefactor of humanity was led forth for the consummation of the frightful scenes which had continued all night long; the preternatural gloom which overshadowed the earth at the most awful part of this drama;§ all these coincident circumstances lend a

* Mosheim and Gibbon, *in loco.*

† The orthodox Christians are forced to resort to many fanciful doctrines in order to reconcile the two ideas.

‡ Blunt, Hist. of the Christian Church, p. 138.

§ Comp. Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. i. pp. 348-362.

If anything could lend stronger probability to this curious belief, it ought to be the circumstantial account of Luke, xxiv. 36, *et seq.*, about Jesus allowing himself to be touched and felt (after the Resurrection) in order to calm his affrighted disciples, who believed him to be a spirit; and his asking for "meat" and partaking of "a broiled fish and of a honeycomb."

strong probability to the belief that the innocent escaped and the guilty suffered.

Before the advent of Mohammed, all these traditions, based on fact though tinged by the colourings of imagination, must have become firmly imbedded in the convictions of the people, and formed essential parts of the folk-lore of the country. Mohammed, therefore, when promulgating his faith and his laws, found these traditions floating among his people; he took them up and adopted them as the lever for raising the Arabs as well as the surrounding nations from the depth of social and moral degradation into which they had fallen.

CHAPTER II.

MOHAMMED was born of noble parentage; the family of Hâshim was the noblest amongst the Koreish; his grandfather Abd-ul-Muttalib was the custodian of the Kaaba. The same year which saw the destruction of the Abyssinian invaders, and which formed an epoch in the history of the Arabs,* witnessed the birth of Mohammed. He was born on the 12th of Rabî-ul-Awwal (Rabî I.), (now forming the third month of the Moslem year,) in the 40th year of the reign of Chosroes the Great, Kesrâ Anûshirvân, the magnificent and successful rival of Justinian.†

* Called the 'Era of the Elephant,' on account of the vast array of elephants the invaders had brought with them. The account of this event exemplifies well how legends grow among uncultured nations. The invaders were destroyed by some pestilential epidemic, probably smallpox; and the word *al-hasabat*, which signifies "pustules," also signifying "small stones," the origin of the legend that the army was destroyed by stones showered from heaven can easily be traced. See Muir, vol. i. Introd. p. cclxv-cclxvi.

† Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. i. p. 333, adopts the 42nd year of Anûshirvân's reign as the year of Mohammed's birth. M. Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. pp. 282-283, however, furnishes very strong reasons

He missed all the parental care which forms the blessings of childhood. His father had died before he was born. He was bereft of his mother, when only six years of age. The charge of the orphan child fell to his grandfather, who loved him dearly. On his death-bed Abd-ul-Muttalib confided his young charge to his son Abû Tâleb, an uterine brother of Abdullah, the father of Mohammed.

In the house of Abû Tâleb, Mohammed passed his early life. Endowed with the most amiable qualities, he won the affections of all who came in contact with him. A touching incident of the attachment subsisting between nephew and uncle is preserved by Moslem historians. Abû Tâleb determined to make a journey to Syria, leaving Mohammed with his own children at Mecca. When Abû Tâleb was on the point of mounting his camel, Mohammed clasped his knees and cried, "O my uncle, take me with thee." The heart of Abû Tâleb melted within him and the little orphan* nephew joined the commercial expedition of his uncle. They travelled together into Syria. During one of the halts, at a

for believing that the 40th year is the correct one; and he calculates that the 29th of August, 570 A. C., is the true date corresponding to the 12th of Rabî I, of the first year of the Elephant. Comp. also Ibn-Hishâm (Wüstenfeld's Ed.), p. 102.

* Tabari, vol. ii. p. 244; and Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 26, make Mohammed only nine years of age when this incident happened; whilst Abulfedâ (Des Vorger's transl.) makes him thirteen.

place called Busra, they met an Arab monk of the name of Bahirâ who, struck by the signs of future grandeur and intellectual and moral qualities of the highest type on the countenance of the orphan child of Abdullah, recognised in him the liberator and saviour of his country and people. He impressed his convictions on Abû Tâleb, and enjoined him to guard his charge with the tenderest care from the paths of danger and the machinations of his enemies.*

Very soon after, the sacrilegious wars of the Fijâr broke out between the Koreish and the Banî-Hawâzin which lasted with interruptions for nine years. In two of the contests Mohammed, though only fourteen or fifteen, accompanied his uncles in this tribal war; and proved himself a worthy descendant of the sturdy and patriotic defender of the Kaaba.†

From this time till the twenty-fifth year of his age, Mohammed scarcely appears in public life. His kindliness of heart, and his gentleness of manners, combined with his fidelity, his honesty, his truth, and his unsullied character, had acquired for him the goodwill and affection of all his fellow-people, and the surname of *al-Amîn*, "the True."‡ In the twenty-

* Ibn Hishâm, pp. 114-117; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 26-27; Tabari, vol. ii. p. 245.

† Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 117-118.

‡ Ibn-Hishâm, p. 117; Tabari, vol. ii. p. 380; Abulfedâ, p. 10.

fifth year of his age, Mohammed had occasion to travel once more into Syria, in charge of the merchandise of his kinswoman Khadîja, a rich widow lady of the tribe of Koreish. The faithful prudence and exalted probity with which he discharged the trust reposed in him created a deep feeling of gratitude in the bosom of Khadîja. A marriage was soon arranged between Mohammed and his noble kinswoman which was solemnised amidst universal approbation. The bride was given away by her own uncle, Amr ben Asad, her father Khuwailid having died before or during the wars of the Fijâr.†

This marriage acquired for Mohammed great consideration among his compatriots. He loved his wife devotedly and watched her with the most tender care. He managed her affairs and looked after her interests with unrivalled prudence. When

* Ibn-al-Athîr (vol. ii. p. 28) is clear on this point; he says:—"wa kîla inn alazzî zavajjahâ 'ummahâ Amr ben Asad wa-inna abâha mâta kabl-ul-Fijâr; kâla al-Wâkidi wa-hû us-sahîh l-inna abâha tawaffâ kabl-ul-Fijâr." In spite of this distinct notice in Ibn-al-Athîr and other most trustworthy Moslem historians, like Ibn-Hishâm (p. 1001), Sir W. Muir adopts the calumniating version of Weil and Sprenger, (though the latter is not quite decided in his views,) regarding the marriage of Mohammed with Khadîja, just for the reason that it is improbable and disparaging to Mohammed (Muir, vol. ii. pp. 24-25, and note). I leave for others to judge of the fairness or unfairness of Sir W. Muir's remarks. As to Khuwailid's commanding in the wars of the Fijâr, the conscientious historian must remember the wars extended over nine years.

Halîma, his nurse, came to him and told him her poverty, he solicited for her the benevolence of Khadîja, who gave the old and poor Bedouin woman a flock of forty sheep.* As long as Khadîja lived, he never availed himself of the Arab custom of taking several wives.† During her lifetime his love was unswerving; after her death he never recalled her memory but with the deepest emotion. Raised above the common cares of life by the gratitude and affection of Khadîja, he devoted himself entirely to meditation and spiritual communion with God.

As yet Mohammed was a stranger to the outside world. He now added to his reputation among his fellow-men by taking a prominent part in the resuscitation of an old league called the Federation of the Fudhûl (Hilf-ul-Fudhûl), formed in ancient times for the repression of acts of lawlessness within the walls of Mecca. Such deeds of oppression and reckless audacity had become terribly frequent; and acts were done in broad daylight at which every soul possessed of a spark of humanity revolted and shuddered. This led to a new compact between four or five of the chief families of Mecca‡ for the protection of the weak and the oppressed. Mo-

* Abulfedâ, p. 9. † Ibn-Hishâm, p. 120; Abulfedâ, p. 11.

‡ The Benou-Hâshim (to which Mohammed himself belonged), the Benoú-Muttalib, the Benou-Asad, and the families of Zohra ben Kilâb and Taim ben Murrâ. Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 29; Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. pp. 330-334.

hammed was one of the most prominent movers in this federation, the revival of which mainly resulted from his efforts.

In his thirty-fifth year, he settled by his decision a grave difficulty which had sprung up during the reconstruction of the Kaaba regarding the placing of the sacred stone, and which almost threatened to plunge the tribes into another of their ever-recurring wars.

But history will always remember him during this period for an act of patriotism the deep significance of which has been overlooked by all our historians excepting Ibn-Khaldûn. Just before the reconstruction of the Kaaba, Mecca had been saved from a conspiracy to rob her of her independence. Othmân, son of Huwairith, an Arab who had embraced Christianity in the court of Constantinople, had come to Hijâz, backed by Byzantine gold, to throw Mecca into the hands of the Greeks. His design was exposed and the conspiracy proved abortive,* chiefly through the exertions of Mohammed. The Western world lauds, till the heart grows sick, the successful exposure of Catiline by Cicero; the foul deed of Brutus assassinating his benefactor; or the murders committed by the two Athenian youths, as the greatest achievements in the history of freedom. But the merit of Mohammed, in saving

* Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. p. 335; Muir, vol. ii. p. 44.

his birthplace from falling under the yoke of the miserable despots of Byzantium, must always deserve the thanks of humanity. Mohammed had thus already served his country faithfully. He had tried also to discharge some of the debt of gratitude and obligation he owed his uncle Abû Tâleb, by charging himself with the education of Ali, one of his sons. Abû Tâleb who had a large family, had not the means of bringing them up as they deserved. Mohammed, rich by his alliance with Khadîja, and Abbâs, the brother of Abû Tâleb, were the most opulent citizens of Mecca. During a severe famine which afflicted the country, Mohammed persuaded his uncle Abbâs to adopt one of the sons of Abû Tâleb, whilst he adopted another. Thus Abbâs took Jâfar; Mohammed, Ali; and Akîl remained with his father.* Mohammed had lost all his sons in early infancy. In the love of Ali, he found consolation for their loss; and the future marriage of the son of Abû Tâleb with the youngest daughter of Mohammed, Fâtimâ, sealed the bond of love and devotedness.

Mohammed had also about this time set an example to his fellow-citizens by an act of humanity hardly surpassed by any recorded in history. A young Arab of the name of Zaid, son of Hârith, was made captive by a hostile tribe and sold to a nephew

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 109; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 42; Tabari, vol. ii. p. 396.

of Khadîja, who presented him to her. Mohammed, struck by the gentleness of Zaid, asked him as a gift from Khadîja; and the moment he was made over to him, Mohammed enfranchised the young boy. Sometime after, Zaid's father, who was tenderly attached to his son, came to Mecca in order to ransom him. Mohammed said to Zaid, he was free to remain with him or go with his father; and young Zaid preferred to remain with his benefactor.* But whether engaged in these acts of benevolence or in assisting his fellow-citizens to frustrate the plans of conspirators, or to settle public questions, the mind of Mohammed was always busy on the future destiny of his race. His two visits to Syria had opened to him a scene of moral and social misery beyond conception. Before him lay his own country, and he beheld his people sunk in absolute barbarism. His noble heart bled for degraded humanity. With the keen foresight of an inspired Teacher, he saw that every hope of social and political improvement rested on a moral regeneration.

Whether in the bosom of his family or in the depth of solitude, he passed his time in profound meditation. Solitude had indeed become a passion with him. Every year, the month of Ramadhân he spent with his family on the mount of Hirâ, devoting his time entirely to prayer and to the

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 160-161; Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. pp. 346-347.

succour of the poor and famished wayfarers who came to him.* Here he often remained whole nights plunged in the profoundest thought, deep in communion with the unseen yet all-pervading God of the Universe. The poetry of the soul can go no further, when it is said, he heard even the stones and rocks and trees, calling on him to fulfil the task an Almighty Power was directing him to undertake.† The mental visions and the apparitions of angels at these moments were the bright though gradual dawnings of those Truths with which he was to vivify the world. Often in the dark and benighted pathways of concrete existence, the soul of every great man has been conscious of unrealised yet not unseen Influences, which have led to some of the happiest achievements of humanity. From Samuel, that ancient seer, wild and awful as he stands there, deep in the misty horizon of the Past, to Jesus in the wilderness pondering over the darksome fate of his people and the magnitude of his work, listening to the sweet accents of the God of Truth;—from Jesus to Mohammed in the solitude of his mountain-retreat,‡ there is no break in the

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 102; Ibn-al-Athîr, p. 34; Albufedâ, p. 12; Tabari (Zotenberg's Transl.) vol. ii. p. 391, mentions the month of Rajjab.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 101.

‡ I think I have used an exaggerated expression in calling Hirâ a mountain-retreat, for it is merely a hill; see Desvergers note (25) to his translation of Abulfedâ, p. 107.

action of these Influences.* In the still hours of the night, in the sweet calmness of the early dawn, in the depth of solitude when no human sympathy is near, a Voice comes to him from heaven gently as the sough of the gentlest breeze, "Thou art the "Man, Thou art the Prophet of God;" or when wrapt in sleep, it comes in mighty waves, "Cry in the "name of the Lord."† The over-wrought mind at these moments raises a Vision before the eye, a Vision of the celestial ministrants who are believed to form the medium of intercommunication between the God of heaven and the man on earth. "The "Father of Truth chooses His own prophets, and He "speaks to them in a voice stronger than the voice "of thunder. It is the same inner voice through "which God speaks to all of us. That voice may "dwindle away, and become hardly audible; it may "lose its divine accent and sink into the language "of worldly prudence; but it may also from time "to time assume its real nature with the chosen of

* Even the superabundance of visions and revelations, with which Paul used to be favoured, form no break in the continuity of this chain; though, as Strauss (New Life of Jesus, vol. i. p. 417) ably suggests, those visions and revelations were vouchsafed to St. Paul in moments of convulsions which arose from the infirmity—probably epilepsy—the Apostle himself speaks of, 2 Cor. xii. 5, 7 and 9.

† Koran, chap. xcvi. v. 1; Ibn-Hishâm, p. 103; Ibn-al-Athîr, p. 34. On the rendering of the word Ikrâ, M. Deutsch has supplied a most valuable fund of information, Quarterly Review, No. 254, Art. Islâm.

"God, and sound in their ears as a Voice from "Heaven."*

We can appreciate the severe mental conflicts, the intensity of feeling, which wrung the heart of Mohammed, when we are told that before he had himself realised his Mission, he was almost driven to the verge of suicide, when a Voice from within, —a voice which proceeded from the Author of the Universe who had selected him for the salvation of his people—recalled him to his duty to mankind.†

His was not the communion with God of those egotists who bury themselves in deserts or forests, and live a life of quietude for themselves alone. His was the hard struggle of the man who is led onwards by a nobler destiny towards the liberation of his race from the bondage of idolatry. His destiny was unfolded to him, when wrapt in profound meditation, melancholy and sad, he felt himself called by that Voice from Heaven, which had called those who had gone before him, to arise and preach,—"O "thou, enwrapped in thy mantle, arise and warn, and "glorify thy Lord."‡ And he arose and girded him-

* Professor Müller, quoted from Stanley's Lectures on the Hist. of the Jewish Church, Pt. I. Lect. xviii. p. 394.

† Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 35-36; Tabari (Zotenberg's Transl. vol. ii. p. 392.

‡ Koran, chap. lxxiv. 1. According to Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 35, the first verses of chaps. 96, 68, 74 and 91 form the earliest dawnings of divine Truth on the mind of Mohammed.

self for the work to which he felt himself called. Thenceforth his life is devoted to humanity. Preaching with unswerving purpose amidst frightful persecutions, insulted and outraged, he held on in his path of reproof and reform.

Khadîja was the first to believe in him and his mission. When he had confided to her sorrowfully and despondingly, the early struggles which preceded the enlightenment of his mind by divine truths, she consoled him and expressed to him her belief that he would be the chosen one for regenerating his people. Now that his mission was revealed, she was the first to abandon the idolatry of her people, and to join with him in purity of heart in offering up prayers to the All-Merciful.

In the beginning Mohammed opened his soul only to those who were attached to him, and tried to wean them from the gross practices of their forefathers. After Khadîja, Ali was the first to believe in the mission of Mohammed.* Often did the Prophet go into the depths of the solitary villages around Mecca, with his wife and young cousin, that they might together offer up their heartfelt thanks to the God of all nations for his manifold blessings. Once they were surprised in the attitude of prayer by Abû Tâleb, the father of Ali. And he said to Mohammed, "O son of my brother, what is this "religion that thou art following?" "It is the reli-

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 109; Abulfedâ, Desverger's Transl. p. 14.

" gion of God, of His angels, of His prophets and " of our ancestor Abraham," answered the Prophet, " —" God has sent me to His servants to direct them " towards the Truth; and thou, O my uncle, art the " most worthy of all. It is meet that I should thus call " upon thee, and it is meet that thou shouldst accept " the Truth and help in spreading it." " Son of " my brother," replied Abû Tâleb, in the true spirit of the sturdy old Semite, " I cannot abjure the re- " ligion of my fathers; but by the Supreme God, " whilst I am alive none shall dare to injure thee." Then turning towards Ali, his son, the venerable patriarch enquired what religion was his: " O father," answered Ali, " I believe in God and His " Prophet and go with him." " Follow him," said Abû Tâleb, " he will invite thee to nothing but what " is good."*

Soon after Zaid, the son of Hârith, who notwithstanding his freedom had cast in his lot with Mohammed, became a convert to the new faith. He was followed by a leading member of the Koreish community, of the name of Abdullah, son of Abû Kuhâfa, who afterwards became famous in history as Abû-Bakr.† His influence drew several other con-

* The above is a paraphrase of the account given by Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 159-160; and Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 42-43; comp. also Muir, vol. ii. p. 99.

† Desvergers in a note (p. 108) mentions that before his conversion to Islâm, he was called Abd-ul-Kaaba, " Servant of the Kaaba."

verts to the new faith, and the Prophet had the satisfaction of seeing his followers increase in number. It is a noble feature in the history of the Prophet of Arabia, and one which strongly attests the inspired character of his teachings and the intensity of his faith and trust in God, that his nearest relations, his wife, his beloved cousin, and intimate friends were most thoroughly imbued with the truth of his mission and convinced of his inspiration. Those who knew him best, who lived with him and noted all his movements, were his most sincere and devoted followers. If these men and women, noble, intelligent, and certainly not less educated than the fishermen of Galileo, had perceived the slightest sign of earthliness, deception, or want of faith in the Teacher himself, Mohammed's hopes of moral regeneration and social reform would all have been dashed to pieces in a moment. They braved for him persecutions and dangers; they bore up against physical tortures and mental agony caused by social excommunication, even unto death. Would they have done this, had they perceived the slightest backsliding in their master? But even if these people had not believed in Mohammed with such earnest faith and trust, it would furnish no reason for doubting the greatness of his work or the depth of his sincerity. For the influence of Jesus himself was lost among his nearest relatives. His brothers never

believed in him,* and once they even went so far as to endeavour to obtain possession of his person, believing him to be out of his mind.† Even his immediate disciples were not firm in their convictions.‡ Perhaps this unsteadiness may have arisen from weakness of character, or it may have resulted, as Milman thinks,§ from the varying tone of Jesus himself; but that it is a fact is undeniable.‖ This intense faith and conviction on the part of the immediate followers of Mohammed is the noblest testimony to the purity of his motives and the truth of his doctrine.

For three years he laboured thus, quietly to wean his people from the worship of idols. At last, he determined to assemble all his kinsmen in his house, in order to explain his mission to them. They came; but mocked his efforts, and taunted Abû Tâleb about the enthusiasm of his son on behalf of Mohammed.¶ Having thus failed to make any impression on his kinsmen, he commenced preaching openly to all his people. Little success attended these efforts. But

* John, vii. 5. † Mark, iii. 21.

‡ And these were the men whom Jesus called "his mother and brethren" in preference to his *own* mother and brothers, Matt. xii. 46-48, Mark iii. 32-33.

§ Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. i. pp. 254-255.

‖ Sir W. Muir admits this in the most positive terms (vol. ii. p. 274); he says, "the Apostles fled at the first sound of danger."

¶ Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 44-47; Albufedâ, pp. 15-16; Koran, chap. xxvi. 214.

his denunciations of their idols, his reproofs, his vehement exposure of the grossness of their worship lashed the Koreish into fury, as the reproofs of Jesus had roused the anger of the Jewish Sanhedrim before. Several times they sent deputations to Abû Tâleb, asking him to stop his nephew from preaching against their religion. At first, Abû Tâleb turned them away with soft and courteous words.* But as Mohammed grew firmer in exposing the weakness of their idols, they expelled him from the Kaaba where he was preaching, and then came in a body to his uncle.† "We respect thy age and thy rank," said they, "but our respect for thee has bounds; and "verily, we can have no further patience with thy "nephew's abuse of our gods, and his ill-words "against our ancestors; wherefore, do thou either "prevent him from so doing, or thyself take part "with him, so that we may settle the matter by fight, "until one of the two parties is exterminated."‡ Having thus spoken, they departed. Abû Tâleb was unwilling to separate himself from his people, neither did he like abandoning his nephew to the tender mercies of the idolaters. Sending for Mohammed, he informed him of the speech of the Koreish, and begged him to renounce the task he had undertaken.

* Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 47.

† Tabari, vol. ii. p. 406; according to this author's authorities, verse 214 of chap. xxi. of the Koran was revealed about this period.

‡ Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 47; Ibn-Hishâm, p. 167-168.

Mohammed thought his uncle wished to withdraw his protection: "but his high resolve did not fail him "even at this moment." Firmly he replied: "O my "uncle, if they placed the sun on my right hand, and "the moon on my left, to force me to renounce my "work, verily I would not desist therefrom until God "made manifest His cause, or I perished in the at- "tempt." "But the thought of desertion by his kind "protector overcame him."* He burst into tears, and turned to depart. Then Abû Tâleb called aloud: "Son of my brother, come back;" and he came. And Abû Tâleb said: "Say whatsoever thou "pleasest; for, by the Lord, I shall not abandon thee, "nay never."† The Koreish made another attempt to persuade Abû Tâleb to deliver up his nephew to them. They offered, in exchange, a young man of the family of Makhzûm, but it was of no avail.‡ The declared intention of Abû Tâleb to support his nephew excited their fury, and they renewed their menaces of violence. The venerable patriarch appealed to the sense of honour and pride of the Banî-Hâshim, the kinsmen of Mohammed, to protect a distinguished member of their family from falling a victim to the hatred of rival clans. Abû Tâleb's energetic appeal was nobly responded to by the

* Muir, vol. ii. p. 164.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 168; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 48; Abulfedâ, p. 17.

‡ Ibn-Hishâm, p. 169; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 48.

Hâshimites, with the exception of Abû Laheb, "the father of flame."*

The fury of the Koreish, however, increased every day; and though, in the beginning, the powerful influence of Abû Tâleb had the effect of warding off an immediate attempt on the life of Mohammed, yet the outrages, to which he and his disciples were exposed, were fearful. The hostile Koreish followed him wherever he went; they threw stones at him and his disciples when engaged in their devotions; they threw dirt on him during his meals. They stopped him from offering his prayers near the Kaaba. They organised a regular system of persecution; each family taking upon itself the task of strangling the new religion among its members. The hill of Ramdhâ and the place called Bathâ became thus the scenes of cruel tortures.† The men or women whom the Koreish found abandoning the worship of their idol-gods, were exposed by them to the burning heat of the desert, where when reduced to the last extremity by hunger and thirst, they were offered the alternative of adoring the idols or death. Some recanted; but the majority held firmly to their faith. They killed with excruciating torments

* The wife of this man, Um-i-Jamîl, is called in the Koran, Hammâlat-al-Hatab, "the bearer of fagots;" for she used to scatter thorns in the places Mohammed frequented for devotion and meditation, chap. cxi. 4.

† Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 50; Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 205-209. See note at the end of this chapter.

Yasar and Samiya, his wife; they inflicted fearful tortures on Ammâr, their son. Mohammed was often an eye-witness of the sufferings of his disciples, sufferings borne with patience and endurance as became martyrs in the cause of Truth. And these were not the only martyrs in the early history of Islâm.* Like the Pharisees tempting Jesus, the Koreish even came to Mohammed with temptations of worldly honour and worldly aggrandisement, in order to draw him from the path of his duty. One day, says the chronicler, he was sitting in the mosque of Hijr, at a little distance from an assembly of the opposing chiefs, when one of them, Otba, son of Rabîa, came to him, and said to the Prophet, "O "son of my brother, thou art distinguished by thy "qualities and thy descent. Now thou hast sown "division among our people and cast dissension in "our families; thou denouncest our gods and god-"desses; thou dost tax our ancestors with impiety. "We have a proposition to make to thee; think "well if it will not suit thee to accept it." "Speak, "O father of Walîd,"† said the Prophet, "I listen." "O son of my brother, if thou wishest to acquire "riches by this affair, we will collect a fortune "larger than is possessed by any of us; if thou

* Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 50-55.

† Wâlid being a son of Otba. It was usual and is so even now among the Arabs to call a man, as the father of so-and-so, instead of using his own name, as a mark of consideration.

" desirest honours and dignity, we shall make thee " our chief and shall not do a thing without thee; " if thou desirest dominion, we shall make thee " our king; and if the spirit (demon) which pos- " sesses thee cannot be overpowered, we will bring " thee doctors and give them riches till they cure " thee." And when he had done, "Hast thou " finished, O father of Walîd," asked the Prophet. " Yes," replied he. " Then listen to me." " I " listen," he said. " In the name of the most mer- " ful God. This is a revelation from the most Mer- " ciful: a book the verses whereof are distinctly " explained, an Arabic Koran, for the instruction " of people who understand; bearing good tidings, " and denouncing threats: but the greater part of " them turn aside, and hearken not thereto. And " they say, 'Our hearts are veiled from the doctrine " 'to which thou invitest us; and there is a deafness " 'in our ears, and a curtain between us and thee: " 'wherefore act thou, as thou shall think fit; for " 'we shall act according to our own sentiments.' " Say, Verily I am only a man like you. It is re- " vealed unto me that your God is one God: where- " fore direct your way straight unto Him; and ask " pardon of Him for what is past. And woe be to " the idolaters; who give not the appointed alms, " and believe not in the life to come! But as to " those who believe and work righteousness, they " shall receive an everlasting reward. . . ."* When

* Koran, chap. xli.

the Prophet finished this recitation, he said to Otba, "Thou hast heard, now take the course which seem-"eth best to thee."*

Profoundly afflicted by the persecution of his disciples, whose position every day became more and more unbearable, he advised them to go to Abyssinia and remain there, till some change for the better occurred in the feelings of the Koreish. Some immediately availed themselves of the advice, and sailed, to the number of fifteen, to the hospitable shores of Abyssinia. This is called the first Flight in the history of Islâm, and occurred in the 5th year of Mohammed's Mission [615 A.C.]. These emigrants were soon joined by many more of their fellow-sufferers and labourers in the cause of Truth, until their number amounted to eighty-two or eighty-three men and eighteen women.† But the untiring hostility of the Koreish did not allow them rest or peace even here. The Koreish sent deputies to the King of Abyssinia (Najâshi, Negus) to demand the delivery of these refugees in order to put them to death. They stated the chief charges against them to be their abjuration of the old religion and their adoption of a new one. The king sent for the exiles and enquired of them, whether what their enemies had stated was true. "What is this religion for

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 185, 186.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 208, *et seq.* Ibn-al-Athir, vol. ii. p. 58; Abulfedâ, p. 20.

which you have abandoned your former faith?" asked the king, "and adopted neither mine nor that of any other people." Jâfar, son of Abû Tâlcb, and brother of Ali, acting as spokesman for the whole body of emigrants, spoke thus:—"O king, "we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and "barbarism*—we adored idols; we ate dead bodies; "and we spoke abominations; we disregarded every "feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality "and neighbourhood; we knew no law but that of "the strong, when God raised among us a man, of "whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we "were aware; and he called us to the Unity of "God, and taught us not to associate any thing "with Him;† he forbade us the worship of idols, "and enjoined us to speak the truth; to be faithful "to our trusts; to be merciful and to regard the "rights of neighbours; he forbade us to speak evil "of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he "ordered us to fly vices, and to abstain from evil; "to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe the "fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted "his teachings and his injunctions to worship God "and not to associate anything with Him. For this "reason, our people have risen against us, have per-

* The word "Jâhilyat" is very comprehensive, including every shade of meaning.

† The idolaters are almost always called "Associators," *Mushrikîn*, in the Koran, or men who associate other beings with God.

"secuted us in order to make us forego the worship "of God and to return to the worship of idols of "wood, and other abominations. They have tor- "tured and injured us, until finding no safety "among them, we have come to thy country, and "hope thou wilt protect us from their oppression."*

The demands of the Koreish were scouted by the king, and the deputies returned in confusion to Mecca.

Here, we may pause for a moment in the course of our history, and recognise the deep significance of this touching episode. The words of Jâfar contain a comprehensive summary of the entire teachings of Mohammed. No person has ever succeeded in equalling the burning enthusiasm of that man, pleading the cause of his fellow-religionists and persecuted kinsmen.

Whilst the disciples of Mohammed were seeking safety in other lands from the persecution of their enemies, he himself stood bravely at his post, and amidst every opprobrium, insult and outrage pursued his mission. Again they came to him with promises of honour and riches in order to seduce him from his duty; the reply was as before, full of life, full of faith. "I am neither desirous of "riches, nor ambitious of dignity, nor of dominion; "I am sent by God, who has ordained me to an- "nounce glad tidings unto you. I give you the

* Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 61; and Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 219, 220.

"words of my Lord; I admonish you. If you will "accept what I bring you, there is happiness for you "in this world and in the next; if you reject my "admonitions, I shall be patient, and leave God to "judge between you and me."* They asked for miracles to prove his mission. Remark his reply. "God has not sent me to you to work wonders. "He has sent me to preach to you. If you will "accept what I bring you, you will have happiness "in this world and the next. If you reject my ad- "monitions, I shall be patient, and God will judge "between you and me." The sublimity of these words have been hardly recognised even to the present day. Disclaiming every power of wonder-working, Mohammed rests the truth of his divine commission entirely upon his teachings. "Listen to what I say, and happy will be your lot here and hereafter" is his invariable appeal to his hostile and idolatrous people. "I am but a man like you," he says, "but I bring you hopeful tidings."† The answer he receives breathes a fierce animosity paral-

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 188.

† The passage of Sir W. Muir on this point is, to say the least, remarkable. He says, "whether the idolatry of Mecca would not have succumbed without a struggle before such preaching as Mahomet's, *sustained by reasonable evidence*, may be matter for speculation," (the italics are his own), vol. ii. p. 114. Like the Koreish, Sir W. Muir is not satisfied with the teachings unless supported by wonder-workings. A few devils cast out would have satisfied both the Koreish and in later ages the Christian historians.

leled only by the darkest days of Arian or Pelagian persecution in Christendom. "Know this, O Mo-"hammed," said they, "we shall never cease to stop "thee from preaching, till either thou or we perish."

Supported, however, by a firm conviction in Divine assistance, and upheld by the admonitions of the heavenly voice within, which he believed, in the sincerity of his heart, to be the voice of God, conveyed to him by the ministrators of heavenly mercy, he continued his preaching undeterred by the hostility of his enemies, or by the injuries they inflicted upon him. In spite of all opposition, however, slowly, but surely, the new teachings gained ground. The seeds of truth thus scattered could not fail to fructify. The wild Arab of the desert, the trading citizen of distant townships, who came to the national fair, heard the words of the strange man, whom his enemies thought possessed, listened to the admonitions, in which he poured forth his soul; listened with awe and wonder to his denunciations of their divinities of wood and stone, and of their superstitions; and carried back to their distant homes new light and new life, even unconsciously to themselves. The satires, the ill-names his enemies heaped upon Mohammed tended to make his words more extensively known. An Yathrebite* wrote to the

* The city of Yathreb was not called Medîna (the city *par excellence*) until Mohammed's arrival there; from that time it was

Koreish of Mecca, and, holding up the examples of bygone ages, exhorted them not to become embroiled with civil dissensions and warfare. He also advised them to give a hearing to the new preacher:—

"An honourable man has adopted a certain re-
"ligion, why persecute him? for it is only the Lord
"of the heavens who can read the heart of man!
"Follow the true religion: our eyes are fixed on
"you; *they* follow the right track who keep always
"in view the highest points."*

About this time, also, Mohammed had the satisfaction of seeing his uncle, Hamzâ, and the well-known Omar,† both men of great energy, adopt his religion. Hamzâ, indeed, was the prototype of Ali in bravery, generosity, and chivalrous grandeur of character.

The accession of strength brought to the new faith, by the adhesion of Hamzâ and Omar, was counterbalanced by the loss of Abû Tâleb and Khadîja, in the same year, (619-620 A.C.). The venerable chief of the Banî-Hâshim had stood faithfully by his nephew. For three consecutive years previous to his death he and his kinsmen—the

called, in honour to him, "the city of the prophet," (Medînat-un-Nabî).

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 180. This does not prove that the idea of Godhead was general among the Arabs. An exceptional man does not represent the race or tribe.

† Afterwards Caliph.

children of Hâshim* and his brother, Muttalib,—had been beleaguered in their own quarter, and subjected to every privation by the Koreish, in order to force them to deliver up Mohammed. This siege was the result of a regular league among the various families opposed to the Prophet. Reduced to the last extremities for want of provisions and water, the Banî-Hâshim were only saved by the breaking-up of the league against them, in consequence of external dissensions.†

Abû Tâleb did not survive this event many months; and in him Mohammed lost, not only the head of the family, who had kept it united, but a protector who had hitherto shielded him from the fury of his enemies. The death of Khadîja was a loss equally severe. In the hard struggles of life; in the many afflictions and trials which he had to undergo, she was his sole comforter; and her death, following immediately upon that of Abû Tâleb, fell heavily on Mohammed.‡

* Hâshim was the great grandfather of the Prophet, and the father of Abdul-Muttalib.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 230, *et seq.*; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 66-68; Abulfedâ, p. 21-22.

‡ Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 69, 70.

NOTE TO CHAPTER II.

Sir W. Muir thinks M. Caussin de Perceval has made a mistake in supposing Ramdhâ and Bathâ to be names of places. He thinks they signify the nature of the soil over which these people were tortured, vol. ii. p. 129. To corroborate M. Caussin de Perceval and myself, I have only to add that the existence of these places is an undoubted fact; and Bathâ especially has been frequently referred to by Mohammedan authors as a place in the immediate vicinity of Mecca. For example, the celebrated Hakîm Sanâî says—

"Cho ilmat hast khidmat kun cho bi-ilmân, ke zisht âid,
"Girifta chîniân ihrâm, wa Mekki khufta dar Bathâ."

"If thou possessest knowledge, serve like those who are ignorant; for it is unseemly that people from China should adopt the Ihrâm, that is to say, come on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and the native of Mecca should lie sleeping at Bathâ."

CHAPTER III.

THE death of Abû Tâleb became the signal for the Koreish to redouble their persecutions. The family of Hâshim, deprived of its head, could not afford an efficacious protection to Mohammed. The injuries and outrages to which he had been already exposed were renewed with increased fury.*

Weighed down by the loss of his venerable protector and of his cherished wife, hopeless of turning the Koreish from idolatry, he determined to proceed to Tâyef, and preach to its inhabitants the unity of God. Accompanied by his faithful servant Zaid, the son of Hârith, he arrived among the Thakîf.† But, instead of making a favourable impression, his words roused their fury: they drove him from the city; and the rabble and the slaves followed, hooting and pelting him with stones until the evening, when they left him to pursue his way alone. Wounded and bleeding, footsore and weary, he betook himself to prayer under the shade of some palm trees, which afforded a welcome shelter to the

* Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 69. † The people of Tâyef.

thirsty and famished wayfarer. Raising his hands towards heaven, and with tears streaming from his eyes, he cried: "O Lord! I make my complaint unto Thee "out of my feebleness and the vanity of my wishes. "I am insignificant in the sight of men. O Thou "Most Merciful! Lord of the weak! Thou art my "Lord! Do not forsake me. Leave me not a prey "to strangers, nor to mine enemies. If thou art "not offended, I am safe. I seek refuge in the "light of Thy countenance, by which all darkness is "dispersed, and peace comes here and hereafter. "Let not Thy anger descend on me; solve my "difficulties as it pleaseth Thee. There is no power, "no help, but in Thee."*

Mohammed returned to Mecca, sorely stricken in heart. He lived here for some time, retired from his people, preaching occasionally, but confining his efforts mainly to strangers congregated in Mecca, and its vicinity, during the season of the annual pilgrimage; hoping, as Tabari expresses it, to find among them some who would believe in him, and carry the truth to their people.

One day, whilst thus sadly and sorrowfully, but yet hopefully working among these half-traders, half-pilgrims, he came upon a group of six men, from the distant city of Yathreb, conversing together. He asked them to sit down and listen to him; and they

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 279-280; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 70, 71.

sat down, and listened. Struck by his earnestness, and the truth of his words, they became his proselytes, (620 A.C.);* and, returning to their city, they spread the news, with lightning-rapidity, that a Prophet had risen among the Arabs, who was to call them to God, and put an end to their dissensions which had lasted for centuries.

Next year these Yathrebites returned, and brought six more of their fellow-citizens as deputies from the two principal tribes who occupied that city.†

On the self-same spot which had witnessed the conversion of the former six, the new-comers gave in their adhesion to Mohammed. This is called the first Pledge of Akaba, from the name of the hill on which the conference was held.‡

The Pledge they took was as follows:—"We will "not associate anything with God; we will not steal; "nor commit adultery, nor fornication; we will not "kill our children; we will abstain from calumny "and slander; we will obey the Prophet in every-"thing that is right; and we will be faithful to him "in weal and in sorrow."§

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 286, 287; Tabari (Zotenberg's trans.), vol. ii. p. 438.

† Aus and Khazraj.

‡ In the history of Islâm, this Pledge is also called the "Pledge of Women," in contradistinction to the second Pledge, in which the deputies of Yathreb took an oath to assist the Moslems, even by arms, against the attacks and outrages of their enemies.

§ Ibn-Hishâm, p. 289; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 73, 74.

After the Pledge, they returned home with a disciple of Mohammed to teach them the fundamental doctrines of the new religion, which rapidly spread among the inhabitants of Yathreb.

The interval which elapsed between the first and second Pledge is remarkable, as one of the most critical periods of Mohammed's mission. The sublime trust of Mohammed in God, and the grandeur of his character never stand forth more prominently than at this period. He was sad at the sight of his people so sternly wedded to idolatry;* but his sorrow was assuaged by the hope that the truth would in the end prevail. He might not live to see it;† but as surely as darkness flies before the rays of the sun, so surely falsehood would vanish before truth.‡ Regarding this epoch, a few words of unconscious admiration escape even the lips of Muir: "Mahomet, "thus holding his people at bay; waiting, in the still "expectation of victory, to outward appearance "defenceless, and with his little band as it were in "the lion's mouth; yet, trusting in His Almighty "power, whose messenger he believed himself to be, "resolute and unmoved;—presents a spectacle of "sublimity, paralleled only in the Sacred Records by "such scenes as that of the Prophet of Israel, when

* Koran, chap. vi. verse 107.

† Koran, chap. xl. verse 78; xliii. verse 40, &c.

‡ Koran, chap. xxi. verse 18.

"he complained to his Master, 'I, even I only, am "left.'"*

This period is also remarkable for that notable vision of the Ascension, which has furnished worlds of golden dreams for the imaginative genius of poets and traditionists. They have woven beautiful and gorgeous legends round the simple words of the Koran: "Praise be to Him who carried His servant "by night from the sacred temple to the temple "that is more remote, whose precincts we have "blessed, that we might show him some of our "signs! for He is the Hearer, the Seer."† And

* Life of Mahomet, vol. ii. p. 228. That which follows is characteristic of Sir W. Muir. "Nay, the spectacle is in one point of view "*more* marvellous; because the Prophets of old were upheld by a "divine inspiration . . . while, with the Arabian Prophet . . . "the confessed inability to work any miracle," &c., &c. I wonder what is the standard by which the historian judges of the difference in the character of the inspirations; or whether some particular inspiration has been vouchsafed him to institute these comparisons? The spirit which incited the Arabs to ask Mohammed to cause wells and rivers to gush forth, to bring down the heavens piecemeal, to raise a house of gold, seems still to exist, when we see a writer in the nineteenth century lay so much stress on Mohammed's "confessed "inability to work any miracle." The rationalist of every age will be satisfied with the unanswerable reply of Mohammed to the idolaters of those days, which would apply equally well to the Christians of the present: "My Lord be praised! Am I more than "a man sent as an apostle? . . . Angels do not commonly walk "the earth, or God would have despatched an angel to preach His "truth to you." Comp. Deutsch on Islâm, in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 254, p. 322-323.

† Koran, chap. xvii. verse 1.

again: "And remember we said to thee, verily, thy "Lord is round about mankind; we ordained the "vision which we showed thee."* "All that Mo- "hammedans *must* believe respecting the Merâj is, "that *the Prophet saw himself*, in a vision, trans- "ported from Mecca to Jerusalem, and that in such "vision he really beheld some of the greatest signs "of his Lord. It must be evident to the reader "that the visions also of a prophet are a mode of "divine inspiration."†

The following year (622 B.C.) the Yathrebites, who had adopted the new religion, repaired to Mecca, to the number of seventy-five, in company with their idolatrous brethren, to invite the Prophet to their city;‡ but the idolaters had no knowledge of the intention of their companions.

In the stillness of night,§ when all hostile elements appeared slumbering, these pioneers of the new faith

* Koran, chap. xvii. verse 62.

† Syed Ahmied Khan; Ess. xi. p. 34. Muir, to my mind, is quite correct when he says that "the earliest authorities point only to a "vision, not to a real bodily journey," vol. ii. p. 221, note. Compare also the early traditions given by Ibn-Hishâm, p. 267, which prove that the ascension was a Rûya, a vision. It may, I think, be fairly asked why Christians, who believe in the bodily resurrection and bodily ascension of Jesus and of Elijah, should look upon those Moslems, who believe in the bodily ascension of Mohammed, as less rational than themselves?

‡ Ibn-Hishâm, p. 296.

§ In the night of the first and second day of the Tashrîk, the period of three days, which follow immediately the celebration of the rites of the pilgrimage.

met under the hill which had witnessed the first Pledge. Mohammed appeared among them, accompanied by his uncle Abbâs, who, though not a convert, yet took a warm interest in the progress of Islâm. He opened the conference and vividly described to the Yathrebites the risks they incurred by adopting Islâm, and inviting its teacher to their city. They replied with one voice they adopted the religion though conscious of the dangers that surrounded them. "Speak, O Prophet of God," said they, "and exact any pledge for thyself and thy "Lord." The Prophet began, as was his wont, by reciting several passages of the Koran; he then invited all present to the service of God, and dwelt upon the blessings of the new dispensation.* The former Pledge was repeated, that they would worship none but God—that they would observe the precepts of Islâm—that they would obey Mohammed in all that was right, and defend him and his even as they would their women and children.† "And," said they, "if we die in the cause of God, what shall "be our return?" "Happiness hereafter," was the reply.‡ "But," said they, "thou wilt not leave us "in the hour of prosperity, to return to thy people?" The Prophet smiled and said: "Nay, never; your "blood is my blood; I am yours, you are mine."

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 296; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 76.

† Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 7.

‡ Abulfedâ, p. 29; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 77.

"Give us then thy hand;" and each one, placing his hand on the Prophet's hand, swore allegiance to him and his God. Scarcely had the compact been concluded, when the voice of a Meccan, who had been watching this scene from a distance, came floating on the night air, striking a sudden panic into the self-denying hearts there assembled. The firm words of Mohammed restored their presence of mind.

Mohammed then selected twelve men from among them,—men of position, pointed out to him by the voice of the people, as his delegates (Nakîbs).* Thus was concluded the second Pledge of Akaba.

The Meccan spy had already spread the news of this conference through the city. Astounded at the temerity of Mohammed and his followers, the Koreish proceeded in a body to the *caravan* of the Yathrebites, to demand the men who had entered into the Pledge with him. Finding no clue, however, as to the persons who had taken part at the meeting, they allowed the *caravan* to depart unmolested. But this apparent moderation on the part of the Koreish formed only a prelude to a furious persecution of Mohammed and his disciples. The position of the latter became every day more and

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 297-300. Seventy-five people, men and women, took part in this Pledge. This event occurred in the month of Dhu'l-Hajja, and the Prophet stopped at Mecca throughout the remainder of this month, and Moharram and Safar. In Rabi I. he left for Medina; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 78.

more perilous. The Prophet, fearing a general massacre, advised his followers to seek immediate safety at Yathreb; whereupon, about one hundred families silently disappeared by twos and threes from Mecca, and proceeded to Yathreb, where they were received with enthusiasm. Entire quarters of the city thus became deserted; and Otba, the son of Rabîa, at the sight of these vacant abodes, once so full of life, "sighed heavily," and recited the old verse: "Every "dwelling-place, even if it has been blessed ever so "long, will one day become a prey to unhappiness "and bitter wind;" "And," he sorrowfully added, "all this is the work of the son of our brother, who "has scattered our assemblies, ruined our affairs, and "created dissension amongst us."*

As it was with Jesus, so it was with Mohammed; only with this difference, that in one case the Teacher himself says: "Think not that I came to send peace "on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword: "for I am come to set a man at variance against his "father, and the daughter against her mother, and "the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."† In Mohammed's case it is one of his most persevering opponents who accuses him of creating dissension in families.

But throughout this period, when the storm was at its height and might at any moment burst over his head, Mohammed never quailed. All his

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 316. † Matthew x. 34, 35.

disciples had left for Yathreb; alone he remained, bravely at his post, with the devoted Ali and the venerable Abû Bakr.

Meanwhile the clouds were gathering fast. Fearful of the escape of the Prophet, an assembly of the Koreish met in all dispatch in the town-hall (Dâr-un-Nedwâ), and some chiefs of other clans were invited to attend. The matter had become one of life and death. Stormy was the meeting, for fear had entered their hearts. Imprisonment for life, expulsion from the city, each was debated in turn. Assassination was then proposed; but assassination by one man would have exposed him and his family to the vengeance of blood. The difficulty was at last solved by Abû Jahl, who suggested that a number of courageous men, chosen from different families should sheathe their swords simultaneously in Mohammed's bosom, in order that the responsibility of the deed might rest upon all, and the relations of Mohammed might consequently be unable to avenge it.* This proposal was accepted, and a number of noble youths were selected for the sanguinary deed. As the night advanced, the assassins posted themselves round the Prophet's house. Thus

* Ibn Hishâm, pp. 323-325; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 79; the Koran, chap. viii. verse 30. According to Ibn Hishâm, this proposal of Abû Jahl, one of the Koreish, was seconded by a stranger, in the guise of a venerable Sheikh, whom tradition has resolved into Satan himself.

they watched all night long, waiting to kill him when he should leave his house early in the dawn, peeping now and then through a hole in the door to make sure that he still lay on his bed. But, meanwhile, the instinct of self-preservation, the instinct which had often led the great Prophet of Nazareth to evade his enemies,* had warned Mohammed of the danger. In order to keep the attention of the assassins fixed upon the bed, he put his own green garment upon the devoted and faithful Ali, bade him lie on his bed,† "and escaped, as David had escaped, through the window." He repaired to the house of Abû Bakr; and they fled together, unobserved, from the inhospitable city of their birth. They lay hid for several days in a cavern of Mount Thour, a hill to the south of Mecca‡

The fury of the Koreish was now unbounded. The news that the assassins had returned unsuccessful, and Mohammed had escaped, aroused their whole energy. Horsemen scoured the country. A price was set upon Mohammed's head.§ Once or twice the danger approached so near that the heart of old Abû Bakr quaked with fear. "We are but two," said he. "Nay," said Mohammed, "we are three; "God is with us." And he was with them. After

* Comp. Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. i. p. 253.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 325; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 80.

‡ See Desverger's note (57) to his Abulfedâ, p. 116.

§ Of a hundred camels. Ibn-Hishâm, p. 328; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 81.

three days the Koreish slackened their efforts. All this time Mohammed and his companion were sustained by food brought to them at night by the daughter of Abû Bakr.* On the evening of the third day the fugitives left the cavern, and, procuring with great difficulty two camels, endeavoured to reach Yathreb by unfrequented paths. But even here the way was full of danger. The heavy price set upon Mohammed's head had brought out many horsemen from Mecca, and they were still diligently seeking for the helpless wanderer. One, a wild and fierce warrior, actually caught sight of the fugitives and pursued them. Again the heart of Abû Bakr misgave him, and he cried, "We are lost;" "Be not afraid," said the Prophet, "God will protect us." As the Idolater overtook Mohammed, his horse reared and fell. Struck with awe, he entreated the forgiveness of the man whom he was pursuing, and asked for an attestation of his pardon. This was given to him on a piece of bone by Abû Bakr.†

The fugitives continued their journey without further molestation, and soon they reached the territories of Yathreb. It was a hot day in June 622, of the Christian era, when Mohammed alighted from his camel upon the soil which was thenceforth to become his home and his refuge. A Jew watching on a tower first espied him,‡ and thus were the words of the

* Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 81.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 331-332; Ibn-al-Athîr, *ibid.*

‡ Ibn-Hishâm. p. 334.

Koran fulfilled, "They to whom the Scriptures have "been given, recognise him as they do their own "children."* Mohammed and his companion rested for a few days† at a village called Koba,‡ situated only two miles to the south of Yathreb, and remarkable for its beauty and fertility. Here he was joined by Ali, who had been severely maltreated by the Idolaters after their disappointment at Mohammed's escape.§ Ali fled from Mecca, and journeyed on foot, hiding himself in the day time, and travelling only at night, lest he should fall into the hands of the Koreish.‖

The Banî-Amr-ben-Auf, to whom the village belonged requested Mohammed to prolong his stay amongst them. But the duty of the Prophet lay before him; and he proceeded towards Yathreb, attended by a numerous body of his disciples. He entered the city on the morning of a Friday, 16th of Rabi I, corresponding (according to M. Caussin de Perceval¶) with the 2nd of July, 622.**

Thus was accomplished the Hijrat, called in European annals, "The Flight of Mohammed," from which dates the Mohammedan calendar.

* Koran, chap. vi. ver. 20.

† Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Ibn-Hishâm, p. 335; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 83.

‡ See Desverger's Abulfeda, p. 116, note 59.

§ Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p, 80. ‖ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 82.

¶ Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 17-20.

** Ibn-Hishâm, p. 335; Abulfeda, p. 30.

NOTE I. TO CHAPTER III.

The "Hejira," or the era of the Hijrat, was instituted seventeen years later by the second Caliph. The commencement, however, is not laid at the real time of the departure from Mecca, which happened on the 4th of Rabî I; but on the 1st day of the first lunar month of the year—viz. Muharram—which day, in the year when the era was established, fell on the 15th of July.

But though Omar instituted the official era, the custom of referring to events as happening before or after the *Hijrat* originated, according to some traditions, with the Prophet himself; this event naturally marking the greatest crisis in the history of his mission.—Comp. Tabari (Zotenberg's Trans.) *in loco*.

NOTE II. TO CHAPTER III.

The twelve Moslem months are, Muharram (the sacred month); Safar (the month of departure); Rabî I (first month of the spring); Rabî II (second month of the spring); Jamâdî I (first dry month); Jamâdî II (second dry month); Rajjab (Respected, called often Rajjab-al-murajjab); Shâbân (the month of the budding of trees); Ramadhân (month of heat); Shawwâl (month of junction); Dzúl-Kâda (month of truce, rest, or relaxation); Dzúl-Hajj (month of pilgrimage). The ancient Arabs observed the lunar year of 354 days, 8 hours, 48 seconds, divided into 12 months of 29 and 30 days alternately. In order to make their year agree with the solar year of their neighbours, the Greeks and the Romans, and also in order to make the months fall in the right season, they added a month every third year. This intercalation was called Nasî; and although it was not perfectly exact, it served to maintain a sort of correlation between the denomination of the months and the seasons. Since the suppression of the Nasî, on account of the orgies and various heathen rites observed in the intercalary years, the names of the months have no relation to the seasons.

CHAPTER IV.

From the time Mohammed entered Yathreb, his life stands out in the minutest detail. Thenceforth he was chief, lawgiver, and supreme magistrate, and his history became merged in the history of the commonwealth which constituted itself around him.

The two tribes of Aus and Khasraj, forgetting their inveterate and mortal feuds in the brotherhood of the faith, rallied round the standard of Islâm and became the nucleus of the Moslem commonwealth. The old divisions were effaced; and the noble designation of Ansâr (Auxiliaries) became the common title of all who had helped Islâm in its hour of trial. The faithful band which had forsaken their beloved birthplace and every tie of home received the name—and a noble name it was—of Muhajerîn (Emigrants or Exiles).

In order to unite the Ansâr and Muhajerîn in closer bonds, the Prophet established a brotherhood between them, which linked them together in sorrow and in happiness.

Yathreb changed its ancient name, and was

henceforth styled *Medînat-en-Nabî*, the city of the Prophet, or shortly, Medîna, the city.

A mosque was soon built, in the erection of which Mohammed assisted with his own hands; and houses for the accommodation of the Emigrants rose apace. Two brothers who owned the land on which it was proposed to build the mosque, had offered it as a free gift; but, as they were orphans, the Prophet paid them the price at which it was valued.

The building was simple in form and structure, suited to the unostentatious religion he taught his followers. The walls were of brick and earth, and the roof of palm leaves. A portion of the mosque was set apart as a habitation for those who had no home of their own.

Everything in this humble place of worship was conducted with the greatest simplicity. Mohammed preached and prayed standing on the bare ground or leaning against a palm-tree, and the devoted hearts around him beat in unison with his soul-stirring words.

"He who is not affectionate to God's creatures, "and to his own children," he would say, "God will "not be affectionate to him. Every Moslem who "clothes the naked, will be clothed by God in the "green robes of Paradise."*

In one of his sermons he thus dwelt on the subject of charity: "When God created the earth, it shook

* From Abû Huraira, Mishkât, book xii. chap. iii. part 1.

"and trembled, until He put mountains upon it to "make it firm. Then the angels asked, 'O God, is "there anything in thy creation stronger than "these mountains?' And God replied, 'Iron "is stronger than the mountains, for it breaks "them.' 'And is there anything in thy creation "stronger than iron?' 'Yes; fire is stronger than "iron, for it melts it.' 'Is there anything in thy "creation stronger than fire?' 'Yes; water, for it "quenches fire.' 'O Lord, is there anything in thy "creation stronger than water?' 'Yes; wind, for "it overcomes water and puts it in motion.' 'Oh, "our Sustainer! is there anything in thy creation "stronger than wind?' 'Yes; a good man giving "alms; if he give with his right hand and conceal "it from his left, he overcomes all things.'"*

His definition of charity embraced the wide circle of kindness: "Every good act," he would say, "is "charity. Your smiling in your brother's face is "charity; an exhortation addressed to your fellow-"men to do virtuous deeds is equal to almsgiving. "Putting a wanderer in the right path is charity; "assisting the blind is charity; removing stones, "and thorns and other obstructions from the road "is charity; giving water to the thirsty is charity."†

"A man's true wealth hereafter is the good "he does in this world to his fellow men. When

* In examining the moral beauty of any particular teaching, we look to the subject-matter and not to the form.

† From Abú Said Khazri.

"he dies people will ask, What property has he "left behind him? But the angels, who examine "him in the grave, will ask, What good deeds hast "thou sent before thee?"*

"O Prophet!" said one of his disciples, "my "mother, Umm Sâd, is dead; what is the best alms "I can give away for the good of her soul?" "Water!" replied Mohammed, bethinking himself of the panting heats of the desert. "Dig a well for "her, and give water to the thirsty." The man digged a well in his mother's name, and said, "This "is for my mother, that its blessings may reach her "soul."†

"Charity of the tongue, that most important and "least cultivated of charities, was likewise earnestly "inculcated by Mohamet." Abû Jâriya, an inhabitant of Basrah, coming to Medîna, and being convinced of the apostolic office of Mohammed, begged of him some great rule of conduct. "Speak evil of

* From Abû Hurairah, Mishkât, Bk. xxii. chap. xxiii. Pt. 3. It is generally believed that in the grave the soul returns to the body, but only for a momentary space of time, when all the actions of the individual pass in panoramic review before him or her. This idea probably suggested the examination in the grave by angels. But on this point we cannot do better than endorse the orthodox ejaculation: 'Wallâh-àlamô-bis-sawâb'—'And God knows best.'

† Compare this traditional precept with the precept of the Koran, chap. lxxvi. vv. 8, 9, describing the just and righteous, it is said: "[*These*] give food unto the poor and the orphan and the bondsman, "for his sake, saying, We feed you for God's sake only; we desire no "recompense from you, nor any thanks."

"no one," answered the Prophet. "From that "time," says Abû Jâriya, "I never abused any one, "whether freeman or slave."

The teachings of Islâm extended to the courtesies of life. "Make a salâm (or salutation) to the "dwellers of a house on entering and leaving it.* "Return the salute of friends and acquaintances, and "wayfarers on the road. He who rides must be the "first to make the salute to him who walks; he who "walks to him who is sitting; a small party to a "large party, and the young to the old."†

* Compare Koran, chap. xxiv. vv. 27, 28, 61, and 62.

† From Abû Hurairah, Mishkât, Bk. xxii. chap. i. Pt. 1. In giving these precepts of Mohammed, I have, with very slight variation, adopted the language of Washington Irving. Besides the references already given, consult the Kitâb-ul-Mustatrif, chaps. iv. v. x. xii. xiii. xix. xxii. xxiii. and xxv. The 'Mustatrif' gives fully the references to Termizî, Muslim, and Bukhârî. Consult also the 'Majâlis-ul-Abrâr,' *Majlis* (séance), 84.

CHAPTER V.

1 A.H., 19th APRIL, 622, TO 7th MAY, 623, A.C.

THE Jews who lived either in Medîna or its vicinity constituted a powerful element of danger to the new state. At first, they had expected that in Mohammed would be realised the dreams of centuries; that he would be their Avenger—the Messiah of their belief. Disappointed and enraged by the catholicity of his faith, they became his deadly enemies. The popular excitement which his arrival had created had compelled them to maintain for a time a peaceful attitude towards the Prophet of the Gentiles (Nabî-i-Ummî).* Mohammed tried to enlist their sympathy in his work; how far he succeeded in mollifying their hardness of heart will be unfolded in the sequel.

Immediately after his arrival, Mohammed had granted them a charter, guaranteeing all civil rights

* *Umiin*, (common folk, the heathens), has the same signification as the word 'Gentiles' in the history of Christianity, though some commentators translate it as "unlearned," and make it an adjective of *Nabî*. The former signification appears to me, however, the most accurate, as will be seen on comparing verse 19 of chap. iii. ('The Family of Imrân') of the Koran.

and perfect freedom in the observances of their religion. Hitherto we have seen the Prophet only in the light of a Preacher; now, in his conception of the relative rights and duties of individuals and nations, he stands forth as the master-mind, not only of his own age, as Muir says, but of all ages. The principal provisions of this extraordinary document, as far as they embody general rules, are as follow:—"In the name of the most merciful and "compassionate God. This charter, given by Mo- "hammed, the Prophet, to the Believers, whether "of the Koreish or of Yathreb, and all individuals "of whatever origin who have made common cause "with them,—all these shall constitute one nation." Then, after regulating the payment of the *Diat* * by the various clans, and fixing some wise rules regarding the private duties of Moslems, as between themselves, the document proceeds thus:—"The "state of peace and war shall be common to all "Moslems; no one among them shall have the right "of concluding peace with, or declaring war against, "the enemies of his co-religionists. The Jews who "attach themselves to our commonwealth shall be "protected from all insults and vexations; they "shall have an equal right with our own people to "our assistance and good offices: the Jews of the "various branches of Awf, Najjâr, Hârith, Jashm,

* Diat, wehrgeld, price which a homicide had to pay to the family of the victim, if they consented to it.

" Thâlaba, Aus, and all others domiciled in Yathreb,
" shall form with the Moslems one composite nation;
" —they shall practise their religion as freely as the
" Moslems;—the *clients** and allies of the Jews shall
" enjoy the same security and freedom;—the guilty
" shall be pursued and punished;—the Jews shall
" join the Moslems in defending Yathreb (Medîna)
" against all enemies;—the interior of Yathreb shall
" be a sacred place for all who accept this charter;—
" the *clients* and allies of the Moslems and the Jews
" shall be as respected as the *patrons*;—all true Mos-
" lems shall hold in abhorrence every man guilty of
" crime, injustice, or disorder; no one shall uphold
" the culpable, though he were his nearest kin."
Then, after some other provisions regarding the internal management of the state, this extraordinary document concluded thus:—" All future
" disputes between those who accept this charter
" shall be referred, under God, to the Prophet."†

A death-blow was thus given to that anarchic custom of the Arabs which had, hitherto, obliged the aggrieved and the injured to rely upon his own or his kinsmen's power in order to exact vengeance or satisfy the requirements of justice. It constituted Mohammed the chief magistrate of the nation, as

* *i.e.*, the protected.

† Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 341–343. The quaintness of this document has led me to paraphrase it, in order to throw into greater relief its real worth.

much by his Prophetic function as by a virtual compact between himself and the people.

2 A.H., 7th MAY, 623, TO 26th APRIL, 624, A.C.

The Jewish tribes of the Banî-Nadhîr, Banî-Kuraizha, and Banî Kainukâ, settled in the vicinity of Medîna, were not at first included in this charter; but after a short time they too gratefully accepted its terms.

No kindness or generosity, however, on the part of the Prophet would satisfy the Jews; nothing could conciliate the bitter feelings with which they were animated.

Besides the Jews, Mohammed and his followers had another cause of anxiety within the walls of Medîna. The party of Abdullah-ibn-Ubbay * (who had at one time aspired to the regal dignity), actuated by jealousy of the foreign element introduced amongst them, were ever ready, jointly with those who still remained attached to the old idolatrous faith, to defeat all the high aspirations of Mohammed. They kept up a continual intercourse with the Koreish of Mecca, who thus possessed perfect knowledge of all that was going on in Medîna, and were well acquainted with the exact strength of the Moslems. They also knew that the Jews had accepted Mohammed's alliance only from

* This party has become historical, under the name of *Munâfakîn*, "the disaffected," or "hypocrites."—Koran, ch. xliii.; Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 363, 411.

motives of temporary expediency; and that the moment they showed themselves under the walls of Medîna, the worshippers of Jehovah would break away from him and join their confederacy.*

The only question was should they wait till their outgoing caravans had returned, or should they strike the blow at once? They resolved to adopt the former course.† It became now the duty of Mohammed to take measures for the prevention of the dreaded catastrophe, which would have followed a sudden attack by the Koreish on Medîna. He was now not simply a preacher, but guardian of the lives and liberties of his people; his destruction meant their destruction. He was thus bound to check his enemies before they had consummated their design of bring-

* These Jews when asked which they preferred, Mohammed's teachings or Idolatry, replied unhesitatingly, Idolatry.

† I here adopt the notion generally received that the Koreish waited to strike the blow (which they imagined would completely crush the Moslems) till their *caravans* had returned. For my part, however, I do not believe the Koreish were so forbearing and gentle as their modern advocates Weil, Muir and Sprenger would fain represent them to be. The Koran is the most faithful index to the history of the times, and there it is distinctly said, "And those who of their own "accord assaulted you first," chap. ix. v. 13. This passage does not refer to the breach of the truce of Hudeibá, for this was merely a breach of faith, and not a direct assault on the Medinites. It refers, as Al-Jannabi (quoted by Gagnier, Vie de Mahomet) rightly thinks, to the attack of the Idolaters, or the preparations for such atttack on the Moslems. Comp. also on this subject, Zamakhshrî (The Kasshâf) Egyptian Ed. p. 314-15; and the Tafsîr-Husainî, Mirat Ed. p. 304.

ing down upon the Moslems a hundred confederated tribes.

With this purpose, and with the object of driving in the outposts of the enemy, and securing the adhesion of tribes,* whose proximity to Medîna would have made them dangerous enemies in case of any hostile attack from without, Mohammed dispatched several small bodies of men under Hamzâ, his uncle, Obaida-Ibn-Hârith, his cousin, and other chiefs.† Like true sons of the desert, whenever the hostile parties met, they separated without bloodshed, after chanting the praises of their respective warriors, or discharging a few arrows. The Koreish, however, were growing weary of inaction. They had already afforded intimation of their designs by a raid, which one of their noted chiefs, Kurz-ibn-Jâber, the Fihrite,‡ made upon the territories of Medîna, ravaging almost up to the walls of the city, and carrying off an enormous herd of camels. The Moslems pursued him as far as Safwân, in the vicinity of Badr, but the marauder escaped into the Meccan boundaries with his booty.§

In the month of Rajjab of the second year [No-

* Thus the Banî Dhamrâ, Banî Mudlij, and other branches of the large tribe of Kinâna were secured, whose raids, in case of hostility, would have proved destructive to the Medinite flocks.

† Tabarî, vol. ii. p. 468, *et seq.*; Ibn-Hishâm, p. 410, *et seq.*

‡ Fihrite is equivalent to Koreishite, vid. Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 30, *note*.

§ Ibn-Hishâm, p. 423.

vember, 623, A. C.] news was brought to Medîna of warlike preparations in progress among the Meccans. A reconnoitring expedition, consisting of eight men, was immediately sent forward, under Abdullah-ibn-Jahsh, an impulsive warrior. The orders verbally given to him were simply to proceed towards the Meccan territories, the remaining instructions being contained in a sealed letter, which he was not to open until well on his way. When the city was left far behind, Abdullah-ibn-Jahsh opened the letter, and found it contained directions for him to lead his band to Nakhla, midway between Tâyef and Mecca, and there watch the movements of the enemy, and obtain some knowledge of their designs.* While Abdullah was lying concealed at Nakhla, a small caravan passed by. The impetuosity of the Arabs could no longer be restrained; they attacked it, killed one man and made two prisoners, whom, with the spoil, they carried to Medîna. This action grieved Mohammed excessively, and called down a severe reproof upon the head of the offending captain. "Why hast thou acted thus?" said the Prophet, "I enjoined thee not to fight."

This excess on the part of Abdullah furnished a handle to the Jews and the Idolaters for calumniating

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 424; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 87; and Tabari, vol. ii. p. 472.

† Tabari, vol. ii. 475; Ibn.-Hishâm, p. 425.

Mohammed.* Those Moslems, who were still in the power of the Koreish, sent to enquire from Mohammed what answer should be made to these slanders. The reply was in the words of the Koran :—"They will ask thee concerning the sacred "months; say, it is a grave crime to fight therein; "but to turn away men from the path of God, not "to believe in Him, and to expel His people from "His Temple is a more serious offence before Him."† The two prisoners were soon set at liberty.‡ In the meantime, the Koreish were busy collecting their strength for the decisive attack they were meditating. The Meccan caravans were already on their way home. The chief one was soon to enter Mecca, with the wealth of Syria and munitions of war supplied by the neighbouring empire. With the instinct of self-preservation, the Moslems were anxious to prevent these caravans reaching the hands of their enemies. The Medinites, extremely jealous of the

* As it has furnished Christian writers of the present age.

† Koran, chap. ii. verse 214; Ibn-Hîshâm, p. 425; Tabari, vol. ii. p. 476.

‡ This affair of Abdullah-ibn-Jahsh requires a few words more. The letter was given to him in order that intelligence of his route might not be conveyed to the Idolaters, as Muir himself admits (vol. iii. p. 71, note). If Mohammed had ordered Abdullah to attack the caravans, the council which it is admitted was held by him previous to the fight would not have been held; he would have simply obeyed the injunctions of the Prophet. But as Tabari distinctly says (vol. ii. p. 473) Mohammed had strictly enjoined Ibn-Jahsh not to fight.

commercial prosperity of the rival city,* regarded this as a favourable opportunity of diverting the commerce of Syria to their town, and cordially assisted in the frustration of the Meccan designs. This caravan was commanded by Abû Sufiân, the son of Harb, and consisted of a thousand camels. Three hundred and fourteen men proceeded from Medîna to intercept it. Abû Sufiân, however, received timely warning, and immediately sent to the Meccans for succour. His call was at once responded to by a thousand well-equipped warriors.†

The Moslems proceeded to the valley called Bedr, where they expected to find the caravan and its defenders. But the wary Abû Sufiân, apprised of their route, turned aside into another road and reached Mecca in safety.‡ He thence despatched a messenger to Abû Jahl,§ who commanded the Meccan warriors, to inform him that the caravan was

* Since the time Hâshim, the great-grandfather of the Prophet, had established the custom of sending two great expeditions, exclusive of minor ones—in winter into Yemen, and in summer into Syria—the commerce of the Koreish had developed in an extraordinary manner.

† Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 92; Tabari, vol. ii. p. 488.

‡ Ibn-Hishâm, p. 437; Tabari, vol. ii. p. 489; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 93.

§ This Abû Jahl was the same man who had proposed the assassination of Mohammed, see *ante* p. 63. His real name was Abul-Hakam, "Father of Judgment," which the Moslems, on account of his intense bigotry, changed into Abû Jahl, "Father of Ignorance."

out of danger, and to advise him to return. A party of the Koreish were disposed to listen to this advice, but the proud Abû Jahl would not hear of a retreat, until he had destroyed Mohammed, and left a glorious memory of his exploit to posterity. "Let "us go forward to Bedr, and there, by the fountain, "spend three days,* eating and drinking; all Arabia "will hear of it, and will ever after stand in awe of "us." Thus, sure of victory, he arrived at Bedr, where he found the fugitive from Mecca already established. When Mohammed saw the army of the Idolaters arrogantly advancing into the valley, in reliance on their numbers, raising his hands towards the heavens like the Prophets of Israel, he prayed that his little band might not be destroyed. "O "Lord! forget not thy promise of assistance. "O Lord, if this little band were to perish there will "be none to offer unto thee pure worship."†

Three of the Koreish advanced into the open space which divided the Moslems from the Idolaters, and, according to Arab usage, challenged three champions from the Moslem ranks to single combat. Hamzâ, Ali, and Obaidah accepted their challenge, and came out conquerors. The engagement then became general. At one time, the fortunes of the

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 438; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 93; Tabari, vol. ii. p. 490, says ten days.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 444; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 97.

field wavered, but the eloquent appeal made by Mohammed to his people, arousing their sense of duty, decided the fate of the battle. "It was a "stormy winter day. A piercing blast swept across "the valley." It seemed as if the angels of heaven were warring for the Moslems. Indeed, to the earnest minds of Mohammed and his followers, who, like the early Christians, saw God's Providence "in all the "gifts of nature, in every relation of life, at each "turn of their affairs, individual or public,"—to them those blasts of wind and sand, the elements warring against the enemies of God, in that critical moment, appeared veritable succour sent from Heaven—as angels riding on the wings of the wind and driving the faithless Idolaters before them in confusion.* The Meccans were driven back with great loss; many of their chiefs were slain; and Abû Jahl fell a victim to his unruly pride.†

A large number remained prisoners in the hands of the Moslems, but only two of them were executed. They had been noted for their virulent animosity

* Koran, chap. viii. verse 9; and chap. iii. verses 11, 119, 120, and 121. Comp. also, Muir, vol. iii. p. 106. See Note I. to this chapter.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 443, *et seq.*; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 96, *et seq.* Sir W. Muir mentions that when the head of Abû Jahl was brought to Mohammed, he exclaimed, "It is more acceptable to me than the choicest camel in all Arabia." I do not find this passage in any of my authorities, wherever therefore it may be found it is apocryphal; for had it been genuine, Ibn-Hishâm, Ibn-al-Athîr, Abulfeda and Tabari, or some one of them would have mentioned it.

towards the followers of the new faith, and by the laws of war among the Arabs they now paid the penalty of their conduct.*

The rest of the prisoners were treated with the greatest humanity. The Prophet gave strict orders that respect should be paid to their misfortunes, and that they should be treated with kindness. The Moslems to whose care he confided them, faithfully obeyed his instructions.

They shared their own food with the prisoners, giving them the bread which formed the best part of their repast, and contenting themselves with dates alone.† The rich were soon after ransomed; but the poor were released on pledging their word never again to fight against the Moslems. At the desire of the Prophet some of the more educated ransomed themselves by giving instruction to the Medinite youths.

* Nadhr son of Hârith, the man referred to in verse 32 of chap. viii. of the Koran, (see also Abulfeda, p. 41), and Okba son of Abû Muait, who used often to maltreat the Moslems in an outrageous and cruel manner. Comp. Caussin de Perceval, vol. viii. p. 70; Ibn Hishâm, p. 458; Tabari, vol. ii. p. 518; and the Mishkât, book xxiv. chap. 5, part i.

† Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 459-460; Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 79. Muir speaks thus: "In pursuance of Muhomet's commands, the "citizens of Medina, and such of the Refugees as possessed houses, "received the prisoners, and treated them with much consideration. "'Blessings be on the men of Medina!' said one of these prisoners "'in later days; 'they made us ride, while they themselves walked: "'they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it' "'contenting themselves with dates.' "—vol. iii. p. 122.

The division of the spoil gave rise to sharp dissensions among the Moslem soldiery. For the present, Mohammed calmed their disputes by dividing it equally amongst all.* But as such dissensions among an unruly people were likely to lead to mischief, the Prophet, with a view to prevent all future quarrels over spoil acquired in war, promulgated a special law which is incorporated in the chapter of the Korân, entitled *al-Anfâl* (the spoils). By this law the division of the spoils was left to the discretion of the chief of the commonwealth; a fifth being reserved for the public treasury. From this fifth (which included the dues of the Prophet as head of the State,) the poor, orphans, and indigent strangers were to be maintained.†

* "It is remarkable," says Sale, "that the dispute among Mo-"hammed's men about sharing the booty at Bedr, arose on the same "occasion as did that among David's soldiers in relation to the spoils "taken from the Amalekites; those who had been in the action "insisting that they who tarried by the stuff should have no part of "the spoil; and that the same decision was given in both cases, which "became a law for the future, to wit, that they should part alike."—(Prel. Disc. sect. vi.)

† Koran, chap. viii. v. 42. Though the distribution was left to the discretion of the chief of the State, certain customs were invariably observed which under the caliphs became precedents, and thus gave a more definite shape to the law. Comp. M. Querry's splendid work, entitled Droit Musulman, (Paris 1871), tome i. p. 335.

NOTE I. TO CHAPTER V.

The few simple touches in the Koran, which bring into vivid prominence the poetic element of the conception of the angels of heaven fighting for what the Moslems believed to be the just cause, will not yield in beauty or sublimity to the most eloquent words of the Psalmist. Indeed, the same poetic character is visible in both of them; Ps. xviii.

Probably Mohammed, like Jesus and other great moral teachers of the world, believed in the existence of intermediate beings, celestial messengers from God to man. The modern disbelief in angels furnishes no reason for ridiculing the notions of our forefathers. Our disbelief is as much open to the name of superstition as their belief; only one is negative, the other is positive superstition. What we, in modern times, look upon as the principles of nature, they looked upon as angels, ministrants of heaven. Whether there exist intermediate beings, as Locke thinks, between God and man, just as there are intermediate beings between man and the lowest form of animal creation, is a question too deep to be fathomed by human ingenuity.

Mohammed also like Jesus probably believed in the existence of the Principle of Evil as a personal entity. But an analysis of his words reveal a more rationalistic element, a subjective conception, clothed in words suited for the apprehension of his followers. When somebody asked him where Satan lived, he replied, "in the bosom of man."

The belief in angels and devils has given rise to an extraordinary number of legends both in Islâm and in Christianity. The saints of heaven and angels fight for the Christian. The Moslem tries as much as possible to leave the saints to themselves, and only accepts the assistance of angels in the battles of life. Tradition converts the Pharisee who tempted Jesus, into the veritable Prince of Hell.*

* All the Schleiermacher school believe the Tempter to have been the head priest. Milman mentions this view as well as the patristic and orthodox one, but dexterously leaves for the reader to choose which he likes. The chapter of Reuss on Angels, (Hist. of Christ.

One day, during the height of persecution, Mohammed was reciting in the Kaaba the words which now form the chapter of the Koran called "the Star," and came to the passage—"Do you see al-Lât, al Uzza and Manah, three [of your idols." Several Idolaters were present; one of them, fearing Mohammed was about to disparage those idols, called out, "they are sublime idols, and their intercession will be of use to you,"—trying thus to make his words accord with those of the Prophet. The Moslems failing to discover the utterer of these words, concluded he must have been Satan himself, and he was rebuked by the Prophet as such.*

Tradition, oblivious of the beautiful idea that led the Prophet to rebuke the spirit of wickedness which induced the Idolater to utter those words, has generally held to the belief that the Idolater was no other but the Devil.†—Comp. Syed Ahmed Khan, Ess. VI. p. 46-47.

NOTE II. TO CHAPTER V.

The story of Mohammed's inhuman reply to the appeal of Okba, son of Abû Muait, when he was being led forward to execution, is utterly false: it is said that on Okba's asking, "Who will take care of my little children?" Mohammed answered "Hell-fire." This story is so preposterous in itself, so opposed to Mohammed's true

Theology in the Apostolic Age, Engl. Transl. vol. i. pp. 401-404) with the mass of references arrayed therein, distinctly proves that the early Christians, the immediate disciples of Jesus, firmly believed the angels and devils to be personal entities, beings slightly ethereal, but in every way human-like; and this belief, those disciples of Jesus must have received from the Master himself, who, indeed, as Renan says, could not have been, in these respects, intellectually different from the people of his age.—Vie de Jesus, 3rd ed. 1867, p. 267.

* This incident has given rise to the story of the "lapse of Mohammed" among the Christians.

† The Mahommedan patristic notion regarding angels and devils, is similar to the orthodox Christian belief.

character (one of whose noblest traits was his love for children, and who always inculcated love and protection of orphans, as an absolute duty, and an act most acceptable to God,)—that it is hardly necessary to search for its true origin. Christian writers, however, seem to gloat over it, and hence it becomes needful to examine how the story arose.

It originated most probably from the sobriquet of *Sibyat-un-Nâr* (children of fire) applied to the children of Okba. Okba himself belonged to the tribe of Ajlân,* a branch of which inhabited certain valleys near Safrâ, and were known by the name of Banou-un-Nâr (children or descendants of fire). The sobriquet was probably derived from this circumstance; and the story of Mohammed's reply from the nickname.

Another story of Mohammed's having bitterly apostrophised the dead of the Idolaters on their burial is, to say the least, distorted. Tabari thus narrates the circumstance which has given rise to this calumny:—"The Prophet placed himself by the side of the large grave or pit which had been prepared for the corpses; and as the bodies were lowered, the names were called out, and Mohammed then uttered these words, 'You, my kindred, you accused me of lying, when others believed in me; you drove me from my home, when others received me, what destiny has been yours! Alas, all that God threatened is fulfilled.'" † These words which were palpably meant to express pity, have been distorted to imply bitterness.

* Aghânî, according to M. C. de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 70.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 458.

CHAPTER VI.

2 A.H. 624 A.C.

Success is always one of the greatest criterions of truth; and it is not so with the vulgar alone. Even in the early days of Christianity, the good Pharisee said, "Let them alone; if these men be false, they "will come to nought, or else you yourselves shall "perish." If Constantine had not seen or fancied he had seen the notable cross in the heavens; if he had not marched to success under its auspices; if it had not led him on to victory and to the throne, we can hardly conceive what would have been the fate of Christianity. What the victory of Bedr was for Islâm, the victory of the Milvian Bridge was for Christianity.* It thenceforth ruled from the throne of the Cæsars.

For the Moslems, the victory of Bedr was indeed most auspicious. It was not surprising that they,

* The Christians themselves look upon the defeat of Maxentius by Constantine (312 A.C.) as the greatest triumph of their faith. The chapter of Gibbon, mingled satire and history as it is, is one of the greatest monuments of historic genius, vol. iii. chap. xx. This battle was fought at Saxá Rubrá, within nine miles of Rome, near the little river Cremera, spanned by the Pons Milvius.

like the Israelites or Christians of yore, saw the hand of Providence in their success over the Idolaters. Had the Moslems failed, we can imagine what their fate would have been—a universal massacre.

Whilst Mohammed was engaged in this expedition, he lost one of his favourite daughters, Rukaiya married to Othmân, who had only recently returned from the Abyssinian exile. But the fury and the desire for revenge with which the Idolaters were burning did not allow him time to indulge in domestic sorrow. As soon as all the Koreishite prisoners had returned home, Abû Sufiân issued forth from Mecca with two hundred well-equipped horsemen, vowing solemnly never to return until he had avenged himself on Mohammed and his followers. Scouring the country to within a few miles of Medîna, he came down with a fell swoop on the unprepared Moslems, slaying the people, ravaging the fields, and burning the date-groves which furnished the staple food of the Arabs. The Meccans had provided themselves with sacks of meal for the foray. As soon, however, as the Moslems sallied forth from Medîna to avenge the murders, the Meccans turned bridle and fled, dropping the sacks in order to lighten their horses; whence this affair was derisively called by the Moslems, *Ghazwat-us-sawîk*, "The battle of the meal-sacks."

It was on this occasion, according to the authorities of Washington Irving, that the Prophet gave

another example of the extraordinary nobleness of his heart. He was one day sleeping alone at the foot of a tree, at a distance from his camp, when he was awakened by a noise, and beheld Durthur, a hostile warrior, standing over him with a drawn sword. "Oh "Mohammed," cried he, "who is there now to save "thee?" "God!" replied the Prophet. Struck with awe, Durthur let fall his sword, which was instantly seized upon by Mohammed. Brandishing the weapon, he exclaimed in turn, "Who is there "now to save thee, oh Durthur?" "Alas, no one!" replied the soldier. "Then learn from me to be "merciful." So saying, he returned the sword. The heart of the stern warrior was overcome; and in after years he proved one of the stanchest adherents of the Prophet.

But this skirmish between the Idolaters and the Moslems, like others which followed it, proved only a prelude to the great drama which was about to be enacted.

The Idolaters were burning for revenge. They made formidable preparations for another war upon the Moslems. Their emissaries succeeded in obtaining the assistance of the tribes of Tihâma and Kinâna. Their united forces soon amounted to three thousand well-equipped soldiers (of whom seven hundred were mailed warriors), animated with but one desire, that of revenge. This army was as formidable to the petty tribes of Arabia, as the multi-

tudinous hordes of Xerxes to the Grecian states. Marching under the command of the relentless Abû Sufiân, and meeting with no opposition from any side, they took up a well-chosen position to the north-east of Medîna, where only the hill of Ohod and a valley separated them from the devoted city. From this safe vantage-ground they ravaged the fields and fruit-groves of the Medinites.

Forced by the enthusiasm of his followers, and by their fury at the destruction of their property, Mohammed marched out of Medîna with a thousand men. The ill-concealed enmity of the Jews led to the defection of Abdullah ibn Ubbay, the leader of the Munâfikîn, (the Hypocrites), with three hundred of his followers. This desertion reduced the strength of Mohammed's small force to seven hundred men, who only possessed two horses amongst them. But still this gallant band advanced steadily on. Marching quietly through groves of fruit-trees, they soon gained the hill of Ohod. They passed the night in a defile; and in the morning, after offering prayers as they stood in arms, they debouched into the plain. Mohammed now took up his position immediately under the hill. Posting a few archers on a height behind the troops, he gave them strict injunctions not to abandon their place whatever happened, but to harass the cavalry of the enemy, and protect the flanks of the Moslems. The Idolaters, confident in their numbers, marched down into the plain with

their idols in the centre of their army, and the wives of the chiefs chanting their war-songs and beating their timbrels.* The first onslaught of the Koreish was fearful, but the Moslems repulsed them bravely. These latter, under Hamzâ, seeing their confusion, dashed into their midst, dealing blows on all sides. Victory had almost declared for the Moslems, when the archers, forgetting the injunction of Mohammed, and seeing the enemy in flight, dispersed in search of plunder.† Khâlid ben Walîd, one of the Koreish, at once perceived their error, and rallying the horse, fell on the rear of the Moslems.‡ The infantry of the Koreish also turned, and the troops of the Prophet, taken both in rear and front, had to renew the battle at fearful odds. Some of the bravest chiefs in the Moslem army fell fighting. The intrepid Hamzâ, with several others, was killed; Ali, who had chivalrously answered the first call of defiance (*Rajz*) of the Idola-

* Extracts from their war-songs are given by Ibn-Hishâm, p. 562. "Courage! ye children of Abd-ud-Dâr; courage! defenders of "women! strike home with the edges of your swords." Another is really beautiful: "We are daughters of the star of the morn; we "tread softly on cushions: face the enemy boldly, and we shall "press you in our arms; fly, and we shall shun you, shun you with-"out desire," or "shun you with abhorrence and digust." Also Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 118.

† This disobedience is referred to in the Koran, chap. iii. v. 146.

‡ Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. 119; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 26.

ters,* and Omar and Abû Bakr were severely wounded. The efforts of the Idolaters were, however, principally directed toward Mohammed, who, surrounded by a few disciples, and cut off from the main body of his people, became now the chief object of their fiercest assaults. His friends fell fast around him. Though bleeding from every wound, he did not forget their loving hearts, and blessed the hand that tried to stanch the blood which flowed from his forehead.† But rescue was nigh. The brave warriors who under Ali had been fighting in the centre with the energy of despair, succeeded in retreating to a point on the hill, where they were secure from the attacks of the enemy, but full of consternation at the loss, as they sup-

* Tabari says that Talha, the standard-bearer of the Idolaters, a man of heroic bravery, placed himself before Ali, son of Abû Tâleb, and brandishing his sabre, defied him, crying, "You Moslems say "that our dead will go to hell, and yours to heaven; let me see "whether I cannot send thee to heaven." Upon this Ali replied, "Be it so!" and they fought, and Talha was struck to the ground. "Mercy, O son of my uncle," cried he. Ali replied, "Mercy be it; "thou dost not deserve the fire." Vol. iii. p. 25.

† Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 114, and Abulfedâ, p. 44, mention the date of the battle of Ohod as the 7th of Shawwâl; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 21, mentions the 8th; Ibn-Hishâm, the 15th; and several others the 11th. M. C. de Perceval, however, calculates the 11th to have been the real date of the battle, as according to all the chroniclers the day was a Saturday, and the 11th of Shawwâl (26th of January) fell on a Saturday.--Hist. des Arabes, vol. iii. p. 96, note.

posed, of their great Master. Seeing, however, their brethren still fighting in another part of the field, they rushed down into the midst of the Idolaters. Penetrating to the place where the small group of Moslems yet defended the Prophet, and finding that he still lived, they succeeded, after great exertions, in retreating with him to the heights of Mount Ohod, where they breathed again.* Ali fetched water in his shield from the hollow of a rock. With this he bathed Mohammed's face and wounds, and with his companions offered up the midday prayers sitting.

The Koreish were too much exhausted to follow up their advantage, either by attacking Medîna or driving the Moslems from the heights of Ohod. They retreated from the Medinite territories, after barbarously mutilating their slain enemies. The wife of Abû Sofiân, Hind the daughter of Otba,

* The general reader, perhaps, does not know that Mohammed never fought personally. He considered it derogatory to the high dignity of a teacher even to kill a man in battle. In the wars of the Fijâr (see ante, p. 28) he attended his uncles in order to help the wounded in the field. In the wars which his people had to wage against their ruthless enemies, though Mohammed commanded the troops and remained calm and unmoved in the midst of the fiercest onslaughts, he never wielded arms himself. In the battle of Ohod, whilst Ali and the rescuing warriors were bearing away Mohammed, an Idolater rushed, with his lance at rest, on the Prophet, who, faint and weak as he was, snatched the spear from his hands. The man fell from his horse, and his own weapon became the instrument of his death.

with the other Koreishite women of the highest rank, showed the greatest ferocity in this savage work of vengeance, tearing out and devouring the heart of Hamzâ, and making bracelets and necklaces of the ears and noses of the dead.*

The inhuman barbarities practised on the slain created in the bosom of the Moslems a feeling of bitter exasperation. Even Mohammed was at first so moved by grief and indignation as to declare that the dead of the Koreish should be treated in like manner as soon as a victory was gained over them. But his pitiful heart rebelled at his own thoughts, and in calmer moments he uttered the inspired words, "Bear wrong patiently; verily best it will "be for the patiently-enduring."† And from that day the horrible practice of mutilation which prevailed among all the nations of antiquity was inexorably forbidden to the Moslems.‡

Shortly after his return to Medîna,§ Mahommod collected his people together to pursue the retreat-

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 580, *et seq.*; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 115-126; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 16, *et seq.*; Abulfedâ, pp. 44-46.

† Koran, chap. xvi. v. 127; Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 584, 585; Zamakhshrî (The Kasshâf), Egyp. Ed. p. 446.

‡ The Jews used to burn alive their prisoners, and most barbarously mutilate the slain. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Persians all practised similar barbarities. Christianity effected no improvement in these frightful customs, for as late as the sixteenth century we read of the most horrible mutilations.

§ See note to this chapter, chap. vi.

ing enemy, probably to show that the Moslems were yet too strong to be attacked with impunity. Abû Sufiân, hearing of this, hastened back to Mecca, having first murdered two Medinites whom he met. He, however, sent a message to the Prophet, saying that he would soon return to exterminate him and his people. The Prophet's reply was characteristic, "We put our trust in God."*

The moral effect of this disastrous battle was at once shown by the forays which the neighbouring nomades prepared to make on the Medinite territories. Most of them, however, were repressed by the energetic action of Mohammed, though some of the hostile tribes succeeded in enticing Moslem missionaries into their midst, under the pretence of embracing Islâm, and then massacred them. On one such occasion, seventy Moslems were treacherously murdered near a brook called Bîr-Maûna, within the territories of two tribes, the Banî-Âmir and the Banî-Sulaim, chiefly through the instrumentality of the latter. One of the two survivors of this scene of perfidious slaughter escaped towards Medîna. Meeting two unarmed Arabs on the way, and mistaking them for enemies, he killed them. These Arabs belonged to the tribe of Banî-Amir, and were travelling under a safe-conduct of the Prophet, which circumstance, however, was unknown to the fugitive Moslem. When he ar-

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 590; Koran, chap. iii. v. 167.

rived at Medîna and told his story, the heart of the Prophet was filled with grief, and he exclaimed, "Those two men had my safe-conduct; why didst "thou kill them?" "I did not know, O Apostle of "God," was the man's reply.*

The Banî-Âmir sent to Mohammed for redress and compensation (*Diat*) for their murdered tribesmen.† Mohammed knew that it was the duty of his people and those who had accepted the charter,‡ to pay the compensation-money. The Jewish tribes of the Banî-Nadhîr, the Kuraizha, and others, were thus bound equally with the Moslems to contribute towards this payment.§ Mohammed, with a few chosen companions proceeded first to the Banî-Nadhîr, and required from them their quota. They seemingly at once agreed to this demand, and requested him to wait with them a while. Whilst

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 600; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 131-132; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 48.

† Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 133.

‡ See *ante*, p. 76.

§ Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. iii. p. 133; Tabari, vol. iv. p. 50. Muir and Sprenger have strangely garbled this part of the affair. Sir W. Muir does not find any authority for M. C. de Perceval's saying that the Jews were bound by treaty to contribute towards the *Diat*. I am happy to furnish him with this authority. Tabari says—"En "suite il ordonna de réunir cette somme, ou la répartissant sur la "ville de Médine, et d'y faire contribuer également les Juifs, tels que "les Benî-Nadhîr, les Qoraizha et ceux de Fadak, que y étaient "obligés par le traité."—Zotenberg's Transl. vol. iii. p. 50. So also Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 133.

sitting with his back to the wall of a house, he observed sinister movements amongst the inhabitants which led him at once to divine their intention of murdering him.

To explain, however, the hostility of the Jews, we must retrace our steps. We have seen with what bitter animosity they dogged Mohammed's footsteps, from the moment of his arrival at Medîna. They tried to sow disaffection among his people. They libelled him and his followers. "They mis-"pronounced his Koranic words—'twisting their "tongues'—so as to give them an offensive "meaning. Their 'look down upon us,' sounded "like 'O our wicked one.' For 'forgiveness,' they "said 'sin;' for 'peace upon thee,' 'contempt upon "thee,' and the like."* But this was not all. By their superior education and intelligence, by their union with the party of the Munâfikîn (the 'Hypocrites'), and by the general unanimity which prevailed among them (so different from the disunion of the Arabs), the Jews formed a most dangerous element within the federated state which had risen under the rule of the great Teacher of Islâm. Among unadvanced nations, poets occupy the position and exercise the influence of the Press in modern times.† The Jewish poets by their superior culture naturally exercised a vast influence among the Medinites;

* Deutsch, Quarterly Review, No. 254. Art. Islâm.

† See note II. to this chapter.

and this influence was chiefly directed towards sowing sedition among the Moslems, and widening the breach between them and the opposing faction. The defeat of the Idolaters at Bedr was felt as deeply by the Jews as by the Meccans. Immediately after this battle, a distinguished member of their race, called Kâb, the son of Ashraf, belonging to the tribe of Nadhîr, publicly deploring the ill-success of the Idolaters, proceeded towards Mecca. Finding the people there filled with consternation and grief, he spared no exertion to revive their courage. By his satires against the Prophet and his disciples, by his elegies on the Meccans who had fallen at Bedr, he succeeded in exciting the Koreish to that frenzy of vengeance which found a vent on the plains of Ohod. Having attained his object, he retraced his steps homeward. His acts were openly directed against the commonwealth of which he was a member. He belonged to a tribe which had entered into the compact* with the Moslems, and pledged itself for the internal as well as external safety of the State. On the arrival of this traitor in Medîna, he was executed. Another Jew of the name of Abû Râfe Sellâm, belonging to the Banî-Nadhîr, who had tried to stir up the neighbouring tribes against the Moslems, was also executed.†

* See *ante*, p. 76.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 548 ; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 7 ; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 110 ; Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii p. 87. See note II. to this chapter.

The fate of these two traitors, and the expulsion of their brethren the Banî-Kainukâ from the Medinite territories, had given rise to a bitter feeling of animosity among the Nadhîr against the Prophet. The circumstances connected with the banishment of the Kainukâ are so romantic as to be worth relating in this sketch of the Prophet's career. Whilst the other Jewish tribes were chiefly agricultural, the Banî-Kainukâ hardly possessed a single field or date-plantation. They were for the most part artisans employed in handicraft of all kinds.* Seditious and unruly, always ready for a broil, like their co-religionists of Alexandria, these Banî-Kainukâ were also noted for the extreme laxity of their morals. One day in Shawwâl, 2 A.H. (February, 624 A.C.), a young girl from the country came to their bazaar or market (Sûk) to sell milk. The Jewish youths, outraging every principle of honour and hospitality, insulted her grossly. A Moslem passer-by took the part of the girl; and in the fray which ensued, the author of the outrage was killed, whereupon the entire body of the Jews present rose, and slaughtered the Moslem. A wild scene then followed. The Moslems, enraged at the murder of their compatriot, flew to arms; blood flowed fast, and many were killed on both sides. At the first news of the riots, Mohammed hastened to the spot, and by his presence succeeded in restraining the fury of his

* Tabari, vol. iii. p. 8; Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. pp. 79, 80.

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followers. He at once perceived what the end would be of these seditions and disorders if allowed to take their course. Medîna would be turned into an amphitheatre, in which members of hostile factions might murder one another with impunity. The Jews had openly and knowingly infringed the terms of their compact. It was necessary to put a stop to this with a firm hand, or farewell to all hope of peace and security. Consequently Mohammed proceeded at once to the quarter of the Banî-Kainukâ and required them to enter definitely into the Moslem commonwealth by embracing Islâm or to vacate Medîna. The reply of the Jews was couched in the most offensive terms. "O "Mohammed, do not be elated with thy victory "over thy people (the Koreish). Thou hast had "an affair with men ignorant of the art of war. "If thou art desirous of having any dealings with "us, we shall show thee that we are men."* They then shut themselves up in their fortress and set Mohammed's authority at defiance. But their reduction was an absolute duty; and siege was accordingly laid to their strongholds without loss of time. After fifteen days they surrendered. At first it was intended to inflict some severe

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 545. Tabari gives this speech of the Kainukâ with a slight variation. But all historians agree in its being defiant and offensive. I cannot understand whence Gibbon obtained the excessively meek reply he puts into the mouth of these people.

punishment on them, but the clemency of Mohammed's nature overcame the dictates of justice, and the Banî-Kainukâ were simply banished.*

All these circumstances were rankling within the breasts of the Banî-Nadhîr. They only waited for a favourable opportunity to rid themselves of Mohammed, and, therefore, looked upon his arrival amongst them as providential. But their sinister designs, as we have before said, did not escape the eagle eye of the Prophet. He immediately left the place without raising the suspicions of the Jews, and thus saved himself and his disciples from almost certain destruction.†

The Banî-Nadhîr had now placed themselves in exactly the same position as the Banî-Kainukâ had previously done. They had by their own act placed themselves outside the pale of the charter; and, therefore, on his arrival at Medîna, Mohammed sent them a message of the same import as that which was sent to the Kainukâ. Relying on the support of the Munâfikîn and Abdullah-ibn-Ubbay, the Banî-

* Some say that it was at the entreaties of Abdullah, the son of Ubbay ibn Sulûl, that Mohammed was dissuaded from inflicting capital punishment on several of the Kainukâ. This is not a settled point, but it has been eagerly taken up by Christian historians.

† As any betrayal of suspicion by Mohammed or his disciples of the intents of the Jews would have made these people desperate and precipitated matters, the Prophet went away by himself, leaving his followers behind, which led the Jews to suppose he was not gone far, and would quickly return.

Nadhîr returned a defiant answer. Disappointed, however, in the promised assistance of Abdullah and of their brethren, the Banî-Kuraizha, after a siege of fifteen days* they sued for terms. The previous offer was renewed, and they agreed to evacuate their territories. They were allowed to take all their moveable property with them, with the exception of arms.† In order to prevent the Moslems from occupying their dwellings, they destroyed these before leaving.‡

Their land, warlike materials, &c., which they could not carry away, were distributed by the Prophet, with the consent and warm approbation of the Ansâr, among the Muhajerîn, who, up to the present time, had been entirely dependent for support on the generous munificence of the Medinites. Notwithstanding the strong brotherly love which existed between the "Refugees" and the "Auxiliaries,"§ Mohammed knew that the assistance of the Medinites afforded but a precarious means of subsistence. He accordingly assembled the principal men from among the Ansâr, and asked them whether they would allow him to distribute among their poor brethren who had followed him from Mecca, the goods left behind by the Jews. With one voice they answered, "Give

* Tabari says eleven days (vol. iii. p. 54).

† Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 652, 653; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 133; Abulfedâ, p. 49.

‡ Koran, chap. lix. 5.

§ See ante p. 68.

"to our brothers the goods of the Jews; assign to "them even a portion of ours; we willingly consent." Upon this, the Prophet divided the property among the Muhajerîn and two of the Ansâr who were extremely poor.*

The expulsion of the Banî Nadhîr took place in the month of Rabî I. of the 4th year.† The remaining portion of this year and the early part of the next were passed in the repression of various spasmodic efforts on the part of the nomade tribes to harass the Moslems, and in inflicting punishments for murderous forays on the Medinite territories.‡

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 654; Ibn-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 133; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 54. A principle was henceforth established that any acquisition, not made in actual warfare, should belong to the State, or the Chief of the State; and that its application should depend upon his discretion. (*Vide* Droit Musulman, par M. Querry, p. 337.) Chapter lix. of the Koran treats almost entirely of the circumstances connected with the banishment of the Banî-Nadhîr. See Sale's Note at the beginning of this chapter.

† According to Ibn-Hishâm, p. 653, and Abulfeda, p. 49; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 55, says it was the month of Safar.

‡ Of this nature was the expedition against the Christian Arabs of Dûmat-aj-Jandal (a place, according to Abulfedâ, about seven days' journey to the south from Damascus), who had stopped the Medinite traffic with Syria, and even threatened a raid upon Medîna; these marauders, however, fled on the approach of the Moslems, and Mohammed returned to Medîna, after concluding a treaty with a neighbouring chief, to whom he granted permission of pasturage on the Medinite territories.—C. de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 129; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 60.

Meanwhile the enemies of the Prophet were not idle. Far and wide the Idolaters had sent their emissaries to stir up the tribes against the Moslems. The Jews were the most active in these efforts. Some of the Banî Nadhîr had remained behind with their brethren near Khaibar, and there, fired with the hope of vengeance, had set themselves to work to form another league against the Moslems.* Their efforts were successful beyond their utmost hopes. A formidable coalition was soon formed; and an army consisting of ten thousand well-appointed men marched upon Medîna, under the command of the restless Abû Sufiân. Meeting no opposition on their way, they soon encamped within a few miles of Medîna, on its most vulnerable side towards Ohod. To oppose this host, the Moslems could only muster a body of three thousand men.† Forced thus by their inferiority in numbers, as well as by the factious opposition of the "Hypocrites" within the city,‡ to remain on the defensive, they dug a deep trench round the unprotected quarters of Medîna; and, leaving their women and children for safety in their fortified houses, they encamped outside the city with the moat in front of them. In the meantime, they relied for the safety of another side, if not upon the active assistance, at least upon the neutrality of

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 669; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 136; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 60-61.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 673.

‡ Referred to in Koran, chap. xxxiii. verses 12, 13, 14, &c.

the Banî Kuraizhâ, who possessed several fortresses at a short distance towards the south-east, and were bound by the Compact, to which we have so often referred, to assist the Moslems against every assailant. These Jews, however, were persuaded by the Idolaters to violate their pledged faith and to join the Koreish. As soon as the news of their defection reached Mohammed, he deputed "the two Sâds," Sâd-ibn-Muâdz and Sâd-ibn-Ubada, to entreat them to return to their duty. The reply was defiant and sullen: "Who is Mohammed; and who is the "Apostle of God that we should obey him? There "is no bond or compact betwixt us and him."*

As these Jews were well acquainted with the locality, and could materially assist the besiegers by showing them the weak points of the city, the consternation among the Moslems became great, whilst the disaffected body within the walls increased the elements of danger.†

The Idolaters and the Jews, failing in all their attempts to draw the Moslems into the open field, or

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 675; Muir, vol. iii. p. 259.

† The whole scene is so beautifully painted in the Koran, chap. xxxiii. (Sûrat al-Ahzâb, "the Confederates") that I cannot resist quoting a few verses here:—"When they assailed you from "above you, and from below you; and when your eyes became "distracted, and your hearts came up into your throats, and ye "thought divers thoughts of God; then were the faithful tried, "and with strong quaking did they quake: and when the disaffected "and diseased of heart [with infidelity] said, 'God and His Apostle "have made us but a cheating promise.'"

to surprise the city under the direction of Jewish guides, determined upon a regular assault. The siege had already lasted twenty days. The restless tribes of the desert, who had made common cause with the Koreish and their Jewish allies, and who had expected an easy prey, were becoming weary of this protracted campaign. Great efforts were made at this critical moment by the leaders of the beleaguering host to cross the trench and fall upon the small Moslem force. Every attempt was, however, repulsed by untiring vigilance on the part of Mohammed. The elements now seemed to combine against the besieging army; their horses were perishing fast and provisions were becoming scanty. Disunion was rife in their midst, and the far-seeing chief of the Moslems, with matchless prudence, fomented it into actual division. Suddenly this vast coalition, which had seemed to menace the Moslems with inevitable destruction, vanished into thin air. In the darkness of night, amidst a storm of wind and rain,—their tents overthrown, their lights put out,—Abû Sufiân and the majority of his formidable army fled; the rest took refuge with the Banî-Kuraizhâ.* Mohammed had in the night foretold to his followers the dispersion of their enemies. Day-break saw his prognostications fulfilled, and the Moslems returned in joy to the city.†

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 683; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 140.

† In Moslem annals, this war is called the "War of the Trench."

But the victory was hardly achieved in the opinion of the Moslems, as long as the Banî Kuraizhâ remained so near and in such dangerous proximity to the city of Islâm. They had proved themselves traitors in spite of their sworn alliance, and had at one time almost surprised Medina from their side, an event which would have involved the general massacre of every soul in the place. The Moslems, therefore, thought it their wisest policy to strike a blow before the Jews could renew their machinations. Under the guidance of Mohammed, they immediately marched upon the Jewish fortresses, and after a siege of twenty-five days, the Banî Kuraizhâ offered to surrender on the terms granted to the Banî Nadhîr. This was refused, and they were required to surrender at discretion. Relying on the intercession of their old allies, the Aus, and on the condition that their punishment should be left to the judgment of the Ausite chief, Sâd-ibn-Muâdz, they submitted at discretion. Unhappily, this man, infuriated by the treacherous conduct of Banî-Kuraizhâ, and their untiring hostility to the new faith, passed a sentence of unusual severity upon them. He ordered that the fighting men should be put to death, and that the women and children, with all their belongings, should become the property of the Moslems. This deplorable sentence was inexorably carried into execution.*

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 686-690; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 141, *et seq.*; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 68. *et seq.* See Note IV. to this chapter.

NOTE I. TO CHAPTER VI.

A touching incident is related by Ibn-Hishâm, (p. 557), connected with the return of Mohammed to Medîna, after the last sad duties had been performed for the gallant dead in the battle of Ohod. When the Moslems were re-entering the city with the Prophet, a woman of the Banou-Dinâr presented herself before them. They told her that her father, her husband, her brother had all perished, fighting for the Prophet. "And what has become of the Prophet?" asked she. They replied, he was safe. "Show him to me;" and they took her to him. "Thou livest still," cried the woman, "my sorrow is fled."

NOTE II. TO CHAPTER VI.

An example of the influence which poets and rhapsodists exercise among unprogressed nations is afforded by one of the episodes connected with the war of Ohod. Whilst preparing for this eventful campaign, the Koreish requested a poet of the name of Abû Uzzâ to go round the tribes of the desert, and excite them by his songs and poetry against the Moslems, and persuade them to join the confederacy, formed under the auspices of the Meccans, for the destruction of Mohammed and his followers. This man had been taken prisoner by the Moslems, in the battle of Bedr, but was released by the Prophet, without ransom, on pledging himself never again to take up arms against the Medinites. In spite of this, he was tempted to break his word, and went round the tribes, rousing them to arms by his poetry. And, it is said, he was eminently successful in his work. After Ohod, he was again taken prisoner, and executed by the Moslems. Ibn-Hishâm, p. 591; Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 90.

NOTE III. TO CHAPTER VI.

These two executions, of Kâb-ibn-Ashraf and Abû Râfe Sellâm, are, by Christian historians, stigmatised with the name of "assassinations," probably, because the Moslems did not go through the solemn farce of a court-martial, or a trial by jury. These historians forget that, by the charter which guaranteed the civil and religious

liberty of the people, it was expressly stipulated: "Every criminal should be pursued and punished." In the absence of a regular state-executioner, any individual might become the executioner of the law; and the two Jews, recognised as traitors by their own people, were pursued and punished. Our Christian historians forget that the "wise" Solon himself, for the safety of his small city, made it obligatory on the Athenians to become executioners of the law, by pursuing the factious, or taking one of two sides in a public riot. They also forget that even the laws of Christian England allow any person to pursue and kill "an outlaw."

NOTE IV. TO CHAPTER VI.

Human nature is so constituted that, however criminal the acts of an individual may be, the moment he is treated with a severity, which to our mind seems harsh or cruel, a natural revulsion of feeling occurs, and the sentiment of justice gives place to pity within our hearts. No doubt the sentence on the Banî-Kuraizha, from our point of view, was extremely severe. But however much we may regret that the fate of these poor people should have been, though at their own especial request, left in the hands of an infuriated soldier; however much we may regret that the sentence of this man should have been so inexorably carried into effect; we must not, in the sentiment of pity, overlook the stern question of justice and culpability. We must bear in mind the crimes of which they were guilty, —their treachery, their open hostility,—their defection from an alliance to which they were bound by every sacred tie. Moreover, we must bear in mind the temptations which they—the worshippers of the pure Jehovah—held out to the Heathen Arabs to continue in the practice of idolatry. Some Mohammedans might naturally be inclined to say, with the Christian moralist: "It is better that the "wicked should be destroyed a hundred times over, than they should "tempt those who are as yet innocent to join their company."* These, my co-religionists, might say with him, with only the variation

* Arnold's Sermons, 4th Sermon, "Wars of the Israelites," pp. 35, 36.

of a word: "Let us but think what might have been our fate, and "the fate of every other nation under heaven at this hour, had the "sword of the *Arab** done its work more sparingly. The *Arab's* "sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all "the countries of the earth to the very end of the world." If the Christian's argument is correct and not inhuman, certainly the Mohammedan's argument cannot be so. Other Moslems, however, might look upon this fearful sentence, on the Banî-Kuraizha, in the same light as Carlyle looks upon the order of Cromwell, for the promiscuous massacre of the Irish inhabitants of Drogheda: "An armed "soldier, solemnly conscious to himself that he is the soldier of God "the Just,—a consciousness which it well becomes all soldiers and all "men to have always,—armed soldier, terrible as Death, relentless as "Doom; doing God's judgments on the enemies of God."

I am not disposed to look at the punishment of these Jews from either of these points of view. I simply look upon it as an act done in perfect consonance with the laws of war, as then understood by the nations of the world: "a strict application of admitted customs of war "in those days."† These people brought their fate upon themselves. If they had been put to death, even without the judgment of Sâd, it would have perfectly accorded with the principles which then prevailed. But they had themselves chosen Sâd as their sole arbitrator and judge; they knew that his judgment was not at all contrary to the received notions, and accordingly never murmured. They knew, that if they had succeeded, they would have massacred their enemies without compunction. People judge of the massacres of King David according to the "lights" of his time.‡ Even the fearful slaughters,

* In the original, of course, Israelites.

† An observation of Grote, Hist. of Greece, vol. vi. p. 499.

‡ 2 Sam. viii. 2. "The conquered Ammonites he treated with "even greater ferocity, tearing and hewing some of them in pieces "with harrows, axes, and saws; and roasting others in brick-kilns, (xii. 31.)" Maitland, "Jewish Literature and Modern Education," p. 21. Compare also Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church, vol. ii. p. 99.

committed by the Christians in primitive times, are judged according to certain "lights." Why should not the defensive wars of the early Moslems be looked at from the same standpoint? But, whatever the point of view, an unprejudiced mind* will at once perceive that not the slightest blame can be attached to the Prophet, in the execution of the Banî-Kuraizha.

Passing now to the number of men executed, one can at once see how it has been exaggerated. Some say, they were 400; others have carried the number even up to 900. But Christian historians generally give it as varying from 700 to 800. I look upon this as a gross exaggeration. Even 400 would seem an exaggerated number. The traditionists agree in making the warlike materials of the Banî-Kuraizha consist of 300 cuirasses, 500 bucklers, 1,500 sabres, &c. In order to magnify the value of the spoil, the traditions probably exaggerated these numbers.† But taking them as they stand and remembering that such arms are always kept greatly in excess of the number of fighting men, I am led to the conclusion that the warriors could not have been more than 200 or 250. The mistake probably arose from confounding the whole body of prisoners who fell into the hands of the Moslems with those executed.

In the distribution of the surviving people, it is said, a young Jewess of the name of Raihâna was allotted to the Prophet. Some say, she was previously set apart. The Christian historians, always ready to seize upon any point which to their mind offers a plausible ground for attacking Mohammed, have not failed to make much of this story. Leaving the examination of the question of slavery to a later chapter, I will here only observe that the allotment of Raihâna, inasmuch as it was perfectly consonant with the customs of war recognised in those days, furnishes no

* I can only remember M. Barthelemy St. Hilaire among Europeans, who has not been carried away by passion and prejudice. Mahomet et le Coran, p. 131, note.

† Comp. the remarks of Ibn-Khaldûn, (Prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldoun, traduits par M. de Slane, Pt. I. p. 14).

ground for modern attacks. I look upon the story of Raihâna's becoming a left-handed wife of the Prophet as a fabrication. Especially as after this event she disappears from history and we hear no more of her, whilst of others we have full and circumstantial accounts.

CHAPTER VII.

6 A. H. 23RD APRIL, 627—12TH APRIL, 628. A. C.

THE formidable coalition formed by the Jews and the Idolaters to compass the destruction of the new commonwealth of Medîna, had utterly failed, well might the Moslems say miraculously.* But the surrounding tribes of the desert, wild and fierce, were committing depredations, accompanied with murders on the Medinite territories; and the existence of the state required the employment of the sternest measures for their repression. Several expeditions were dispatched against these marauders, but the slippery sons of the desert generally evaded the approach of the Moslems. The Banî-Lihyân, who had requested Mohammed to send a few of his disciples among them to teach the precepts of Islâm, and who, on the arrival of the missionaries, to the number of six, had killed three of them, and sold the surviving three to the Meccans,—had, up to this period, remained unpunished. But the time had come when this crime should be avenged. In the month of Jamâdî I. of this year, a body of

* Comp. Koran, chap. xxxiii. v. 9.

troops, under the personal command of the Prophet, marched against the Banî-Lihyân. The marauders, however, receiving timely notice of the Prophet's approach, fled into the mountains, and the Moslems returned to Medîna without having accomplished their purpose.*

A few days had only elapsed, when a chief of the Banî-Fezâra, a branch of the nomade horde of Ghatafân, *(Khail-i-Ghatafân)* suddenly fell upon the open suburbs of the city, and drove off an enormous herd of camels, murdering the man who had charge of them, and carrying off his wife. The Moslems were immediately on their track, and a few of the animals were recovered; but the Bedouins escaped into the desert with the largest portion of their booty.†

The human mind always attaches an idea of sublime grandeur to the character of a man who, whilst possessing the power of returning evil for evil, not only preaches but practises the divine principle of forgiveness. Mohammed, as the Chief of the State and guardian of the life and liberties of his people, in the exercise of justice sternly punished every individual guilty of crime.‡ Mohammed, the Prophet, the Teacher, the Exalter of the human

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 718; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 143; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 72.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 722.

‡ See note I. to this chapter.

race, was gentle and kind and merciful, even to his greatest enemies. In him were combined the highest attributes that the mind of man can conceive,—Justice and Mercy.

A chief of the tribe of Hanafa, named Thumâma, son of Uthâl, was taken prisoner by the Moslems in one of their expeditions against the unruly Arabs of the desert. He was brought to Medîna, where he was so affected by the kindness of the Prophet that from an enemy he soon became a most devoted follower. Returning to his people, he stopped the transport to Mecca of provisions from Yemâma, where the Banî-Hanafa were domiciled. The Meccans drew the greatest part of the necessaries of life from Yemâma, and this stoppage by Thumâma reduced them to the saddest straits. Failing to move the Hanafites, they at last addressed themselves to Mohammed, and besought him, by every tie, to intercede for them. The Prophet's heart was touched with pity, and he at once requested Thumâma to allow the Meccans to have whatever they wanted, and, at his word, the convoys were again permitted to reach Mecca.*

A tribe of Christian Bedouins (the Banî-Kalb) settled about Dûmat-uj-jandal, had, in their depredations, appeared on the Medinite territories. An expedition was now dispatched to summon them to embrace Islâm, and forego their lawless practices.

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 996-998.

Whilst delivering his injunctions to the captain who headed this small force, Mohammed peremptorily enjoined him, "in no case shalt thou use deceit or "perfidy, nor shalt thou kill any child."*

In the month of Shâbân of this year, (November, December, 627,) an expedition was directed against the Banî-Mustalik. These people had, up to this time, been on friendly terms with the Moslems. But recently, instigated by their chief Hârith, the son of Abû Dhirâr, they had thrown off their allegiance, and committed forays on the suburbs of Medîna. The expedition was entirely successful, and several prisoners were taken, amongst whom was a daughter of Hârith, called Juwairiya.†

Six years had now passed since the exiles of Mecca had left their homes and their country for the sake of their faith, and of him who had infused into them a new consciousness, such as they had never felt before, awakening in them the spirit of union, love, and brotherhood. People flocked from every part

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 992. Compare this injunction of the Arabian Prophet, and another delivered to the troops dispatched against the Byzantines, as also the historic injunction of Abû-Bakr to Yezid-ibn-Abû Sufiân, with the commands of the Israelite Prophets:— "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts . . . . . now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass," 1 Sam. xv. 3; "Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women," Ezek. ix. 6. See note II. to this chapter.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 725; Ibn-al-Athir, vol. ii. p. 146.

of Arabia, to listen to the words of the wondrous man who had achieved all this; to ask his counsel in all the affairs of everyday life, even as the sons of Israel consulted of old, that grand seer, Samuel,*—or, perhaps, only to see him and talk to him.

But the hearts of these exiles still yearned sadly for the place of their birth. Driven from their homes, they had found refuge in a rival city; expelled from the precincts of the sacred Kaaba, which formed the glorious centre of all their associations—the one spot round which gathered the history of their nation,—for six years had they been denied the pilgrimage of the holy shrine, a custom round which Time, with its hoary traditions, had cast the halo of sanctity. The Teacher himself longed to see the place of his nativity with as great a yearning. The temple of the Kaaba belonged to the whole Arab nation. The Koreish were merely the custodians of this shrine, and were not authorised by the public law of the country to interdict the approach even of an enemy, if he presented himself without any hostile design, and with the avowed object of fulfilling a religious duty.†

The season of the pilgrimage had approached; the Prophet accordingly announced his intention of visiting the Holy Places. At once a thousand

* Stanley's Lect. on the Jewish Church, vol. i. *in loco.*

† Tabarî, vol. iii. p. 84; Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 174-175, *et seq.*

voices responded to the call. Preparations were rapidly made, and, accompanied by seven hundred Moslems, Ansâr and Muhajerîn, all perfectly unarmed, he set out on the pilgrimage.* The animosity of the Koreish, however, was not yet extinguished. They posted themselves, with a large army, some miles in advance of Mecca, to bar the way, but soon after fell back on the city, in order to keep every point of access closed to the Moslems. They swore solemnly not to allow the followers of the Prophet to enter the shrine, and maltreated the envoy who was sent to them to solicit permission to visit the Holy Places. A body of the Meccans went round the Prophet's encampment with the avowed object of killing any unwary Moslem who might leave the camp. They even attacked the Prophet with stones and arrows.† Finding the Idolaters immoveable, and wishful himself to end the state of warfare between the Moslems and the Koreish, Mohammed expressed himself willing to agree to any terms the Meccans might feel inclined to impose. After much difficulty a treaty was concluded, by which it was agreed that all hostilities should cease for ten years; that any one coming

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 740; Tabarî, vol. iii. p. 84; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 152, and Abulfeda, p. 60, mention the number as 1400.

† When some of these men were seized and brought before the Prophet, he pardoned and released them. Ibn-Hishâm, p. 745.—It was on this occasion that the Moslems took the Pledge, called

from the Koreish to the Prophet without the permission of his guardian or chief, should be re-delivered to the Idolaters; that any individual from among the Moslems going over to the Meccans, should not be surrendered; that any tribe desirous of entering into alliance, either with the Koreish or with the Moslems, should be at liberty to do so without hindrance; that the Moslems should retrace their steps on this occasion, without advancing further; that they should be permitted, in the following year, to visit Mecca, and to remain there for three days with their travelling arms, namely, their scimitars in sheaths.*

"The Agreeable Pledge," (Biat-ur-Rhidwân) or "The Pledge of the Tree," (Biat-ush-Shajara). Othmân being sent to the Koreish to repeat the request for permission, they seized and detained him. The Moslems, fearful of his murder, flocked round Mohammed, and solemnly swore to avenge his death. Ibn-Hishâm, p. 746; Koran, chap. xlviii. v. 17; comp. also Muir, vol. iv. p. 32.

* Salâh-ur-râkib; Ibn-Hishâm, p. 747; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 156; Tabarî, vol. iii. p. 89; Mishkât, bk. xvii. chap. 10, part 1. It was on the occasion of this peace that a Koreishite envoy who was sent to the Moslem encampment, struck with the profound reverence and love shown to the Prophet by his followers,—on his return to the Koreish, told them he had seen sovereigns like the Chosroes, (Kesrâ), the Cæsar, (Kaisar), and the Negus, (Nejâshi,) surrounded with all the pomp and circumstance of royalty, but he had never witnessed a sovereign in the midst of his subjects receiving such veneration and obedience as was paid to Mohammed by his people. Ibn-Hishâm, p. 745; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 154; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 87; and Abulfeda, p. 61.

The unexampled moderation and magnanimity displayed by Mohammed in concluding this treaty caused some discontent among the more impulsive of his followers, in whose hearts the injuries and cruelties inflicted by the Koreish yet rankled. In virtue of the third stipulation of the treaty, by which the Moslems bound themselves to surrender every Idolater who came over to their cause without the permission of their patron, or chief,—the Koreish demanded the surrender of several of the Prophet's disciples, and their demand was immediately complied with by Mohammed, in spite of the murmurs of some of the Moslems.*

On his return to Medîna, Mohammed, in pursuance of the catholic wish, by which he was inspired, that his religion should embrace all Humanity within its comprehensive bosom,† dispatched several envoys to invite the neighbouring sovereigns and nations, immersed in absolute moral darkness, to adopt Islâm, and to drink of the cup of life offered to them by the Prophet of Arabia.

Two of the most noted of these embassies were to Heraclius the Emperor of Byzantium, and to Khusrû Parvîz, the Kesrâ of Persia. Khusrû was then in the first flush of his mighty victories over

* As women were not included in the treaty, the demand of the Idolaters for the surrender of the female Moslems was peremptorily declined.

† Koran, chap. vii. v. 157, 158.

the Romans. When he received Mohammed's letter he found his name placed after that of the Prophet.* Enraged at the insult, the great King tore the letter into pieces. When the news of this contemptuous treatment was brought to the Prophet, he quietly replied, "Thus will the empire of Kesrâ be torn to "pieces." The fulfilment of the prophecy is engraved on the pages of history.† Heraclius, more politic, or more reverential, treated the messenger with greater respect.‡

Another ambassador sent soon afterwards to the Ghassanide prince, a feudatory of Heraclius residing at Busra near Damascus, instead of receiving the reverence and respect due to an envoy, was cruelly murdered by another chief of the same family, and *amîr*§ of a Christian tribe subject to Byzantium. This wanton outrage of international obligations became eventually the cause of that war which placed Islâm in conflict with the whole of Christendom. But of this we shall treat later.

* The letter, they say, commenced thus :—"In the name of the "Most Merciful God, Mohammed, the Apostle of God, to Kesrâ the "Great of Persia," &c.

† I do not mean to say that these words were meant as a prophecy. They might, or might not have been.

‡ Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 163, 164.

§ *Amîr* or *Ameer*, means commander or chief.

NOTE I. TO CHAPTER VII.

The Christian biographers of the Prophet of Arabia, probably under the influence of that fine sentiment called "Christian verity," have denominated the punishment of criminals, "assassinations," "murders," or "barbarous deeds," which to the general reader convey such an idea of horror as to revolt him, before he has time to reflect on the candour of the historian. An individual, enjoying the protection of the Moslems, stirs up rebellion against them or foments disunion in their midst; he is put to death. That is assassination, according to these historians. A woman, the leader of a band of determined robbers, guilty of cruel deeds, is taken prisoner. Some of the wild followers of Mohammed, not more advanced in their notions regarding the cruelty or humanity of punishments than the surrounding nations, their civilised neighbours, the Greeks, the Persians or the Hindus—unknown to the Prophet, put her to death with circumstances of cruelty (according to Sir W. Muir's authority and no other, vol. iv. p. 13). This is at once set down to Mohammed, and he is pronounced "to be an accomplice in the ferocious act." The historian admits that she was put to death without the knowledge of the Prophet, and yet he condemns him as an accomplice. As to the cruelty of the punishment, he forgot that Christian England hanged men and women for stealing a few shillings up to the middle of the 18th century; he forgot the terrible tortures of the rack and the stake which destroyed myriads of innocent beings in Christian Europe. But the story of the dreadful nature of the punishment inflicted on Umm-Kirfa is very improbable. That the woman was killed there is no doubt,—but she could *not* have been "torn asunder by two camels," as this would have required two executioners, and it is admitted there was *only one*. The executioner's name was not Cays ibn al Mohsin, as Sir W. Muir has mentioned, but Cays ibn al Musahhar. Ibn-Hishâm, p. 980.

NOTE II. TO CHAPTER VII.

In delivering his instructions to the captains who headed the Moslem expeditions, the Prophet always enjoined them peremptorily never to injure the weak. "In avenging the injuries inflicted upon "us," he said to his troops whom he dispatched against the Byzantines, "molest not the harmless votaries of domestic seclusion; spare "the weakness of the female sex; injure not the infant at the "breast, or those who are ill on bed. Abstain from demolishing "the dwellings of the unresisting inhabitants; destroy not the means "of their subsistence, nor their fruit trees; and touch not the "palm." Abû Bakr, following his master, thus enjoined his captain:—"O Yezid! be sure you do not oppress your own people, nor "make them uneasy, but advise with them in all your affairs, and "take care to do that which is right and just, for those that "do otherwise shall not prosper. When you meet your enemies, "quit yourselves like men, and do not turn your backs; and if you "gain the victory, kill no little children, nor old people, nor "women. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut "down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you "kill for the necessary purpose of subsistence. When you make any "covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As "you go on, you will find some religious persons that live retired "in monasteries, who propose to themselves to serve God that way. "Let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monas-"teries."—Mill's History of Muhammedanism, pp. 45, 46; Gagnier, Vie de Mahomet, in loco. Comp. these injunctions with the fearful denunciations of the Christians, Catholic, Protestant and Greek, from the days of St. Lactantius to those of the Covenanters.

CHAPTER VIII.

7 A.H. 12th April, 628—1st May, 629 B.C.

THE Jewish tribes, in spite of the reverses they had already suffered, were still formidable—still busy with their machinations to work the destruction of the Moslems. They possessed, at the distance of three or four days' journey to the north-east of Medîna, a strongly fortified territory studded with castles, the principal of which, called al-Kamûs, was situated on an inaccessible hill. This group of fortresses was called *Khaibar*, a word signifying a fortified place. The population of Khaibar included several branches of the Banî-Nadhîr and the Kuraizha, who had taken refuge there. The Jews of Khaibar had shown an active and implacable hatred towards Mohammed and his followers, and since the arrival of their brethren of the Nadhîr and Kuraizha among them, this feeling had acquired greater force. The Jews of Khaibar, united by an ancient alliance with the Bedouin horde of the Banî-Ghatafân and with other cognate tribes, worked incessantly for the formation of another coalition against the Moslems.* These latter were

* Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. pp. 193, 194.

alive to the power possessed by the desert-races to injure them, and prompt measures were needed to avert the evil of another league against Medîna. Accordingly early in the month of Muharram of this year, a well-equipped expedition, consisting of about 1400 men, was dispatched against Khaibar. The Jews now solicited the assistance of their allies. The Banî Fezâra hastened to their support, but afraid of the Moslems turning their flank, and surprising their flocks and herds in their absence, speedily retreated. The Jews were thus left to bear alone the brunt of the war. Terms were offered to them by the Moslems, but were refused. In spite of the most determined resistance on the part of the Jews, fortress after fortress opened its gate to the Moslems. At last came the turn of the redoubtable castle, the al-Kamûs. After a spirited defence, it also fell into the hands of the Moslems. The fate of this, their principal fortress, brought the remaining Jewish townships to see the utter futility of further resistance. They sued for forgiveness, which was accorded. Their lands and immoveable property were guaranteed to them (on condition of good conduct), together with the free practice of their religion; and, as they were exempt from every obligation to contribute to the support of the State (like the Moslems) by the regular taxes, the Prophet imposed upon them a duty of paying to the commonwealth, in return for the protection they

would thenceforth enjoy, half the produce of their lands. The moveable property found in those fortresses which the Moslems reduced by regular sieges and battles, was forfeited to the army, and distributed among the men according to the character of their arms—thus, for instance, three shares were given to a horseman, whilst a foot-soldier received only one.*

Towards the end of the seventh year, Mohammed and his disciples availed themselves of the Treaty concluded the previous year between themselves and the Koreish, and accomplished the desire of their hearts†—the pilgrimage to the Holy Places. This journey, in Moslem history, is reverently styled "The Pilgrimage, or Visit of Accomplishment."‡ In strict conformity with the terms of

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 764 and 773; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 169. The story of Kinâna being tortured for the sake of disclosing the concealed treasures is false.

Frequent attempts were made about this time to assassinate the Prophet. On his entry into Khaibar, a Jewess, animated with the same vengeful feeling as the Judith of old, spread a poisoned repast for him and some of his followers. One of them died immediately after he had taken a few mouthfuls. The life of the Prophet was saved, but the poison permeated his system, and in after-life he suffered severely from its effects. In spite of this crime, Mohammed forgave the woman, and she was allowed to remain among her people unharmed. Tabari, vol. iii. p. 104; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 170.

† See Koran, chap. xlviii. v. 27.

‡ Umrat-ul-Kadhâ.

the Treaty, they left Mecca after a sojourn of three days.* This peaceful fulfilment of the day-dream of the Moslems was followed by important conversions among the Koreish. Struck by Mohammed's kindness of heart, his gentleness, his nobility of soul, many of their most influential men—men who had warred against him and satirized him—adopted his faith with earnest devotedness.†

The murder of the Moslem envoy by a feudatory‡ of the Greek emperor was an outrage which could not be passed over unpunished and in silence. An expedition, consisting of three thousand men, was dispatched to exact reparation from the Ghassanide prince. The lieutenants of the Byzantine emperor, instead of disavowing the crime, adopted it, and thus made the quarrel an imperial one. Uniting their forces, they attacked the Moslems near Mûta,

* A curious instance of the animosity of the Koreish is given by Moslem historians. The rites connected with the pilgrimage lasted three days. On the morning of the fourth, the Koreish sent a message to Mohammed, to hasten his departure. The Prophet proposed to give a repast in token of mutual amity. "There is no need for "that," they replied, "you must depart at once." Mohammed, in compliance with their demand, immediately left Mecca, and encamped that very day several miles distant from the city.—Tabari, vol. iii. p. 111; Ibn-Hishâm, p. 790; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 174.

† For instance, Khâlid-bin-Walîd, who commanded the Koreish cavalry at Ohod, and the poet Amr bin al-As.

‡ According to M. Caussin de Perceval the name of this chieftain was Shurâbhîl, son of Amr (and not as Abulfeda mentions it, Amr, son of Shurâbhil).—Vol. ii. p. 253, and vol. iii. p. 211.

a village not far from Balkâ in Syria, the scene of the murder. The Byzantines and their allies were repulsed; but the disparity of numbers was too great, and the Moslems retreated to Medîna.*

It was about this time that the Koreish and their allies, the Banî-Bakr, in violation of the terms of peace concluded at Hudeiba, attacked the Banî-Khuzâ, who were under the protection of, and in alliance with, the Moslems. They massacred a number of the Khuzâ and dispersed the rest. The Banî-Khuzâ brought their complaints to Mohammed, and asked for justice. The reign of iniquity and oppression had lasted long at Mecca. The Meccans had themselves violated the peace, and some of their chief men had taken part in the massacre of the Khuzâ. The Prophet immediately marched ten thousand men against the Idolaters. With the exception of a slight resistance by Ikrima † and Safwân ‡ at the head of their respective clans, in which several Moslems were killed, Mohammed entered Mecca almost unopposed.

Thus, at length, Mohammed entered Mecca as a conqueror. He who was a fugitive and persecuted once, now came to prove his mission by deeds of mercy. The injunctions the Prophet had delivered

* Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 211, et seq.; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 178-180.

† The son of Abû-Jahl, who fell at Bedr.

‡ The son of Ommeya.

to his followers, to show clemency to the Meccans were strictly obeyed.* Only six men and four women amongst those who had been guilty of some barbarous atrocities were proscribed.† Of these four were executed. The rest of the people, notwithstanding their continuous persecution, in spite even of their recent act of treachery, were treated with clemency and forgiveness. But the idols of the nation were unrelentingly struck down. Sorrowfully, yet not discontentedly, the Idolaters stood round and watched the downfall of their idols. The truth at last dawned upon them, how utterly powerless their gods were, when they heard the old voice at which they were accustomed to scoff and jeer, cry, as he struck down the idols, "Truth is come, "and Falsehood vanisheth; verily falsehood is "evanescent."‡ After destroying these ancient idols, and abolishing every pagan rite, Mahommed delivered a sermon to the assembled people. After dilating on the natural equality and brotherhood of mankind, in the words of the Koran,§ he proceeded thus:—"Descendants of Koreish, how do you think "I should act towards you?" "With kindness "and pity, gracious brother and nephew," replied

* Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 188.

† Tabari, vol. iii. pp. 131, 132 and 135; Abulfeda, pp. 75, 76.

‡ Koran, chap. xvii. v. 83; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 192.

§ Koran, chap. xlix. 13.

they.* At these words, says Tabari, tears came into the eyes of the Prophet, and he said, "I shall "speak to you as Joseph spake unto his brothers,— "I shall not reproach you to-day; God will forgive, "He is the most merciful and compassionate."†

And now was seen a sight never witnessed before in the history of the world. Hosts upon hosts came and adopted the religion of Mohammed. Seated on the hill of Safâ, he received the old pledge, exacted before from the Medinites: "They would not adore "anything; they would not commit larceny, adul- "tery, or infanticide; they would not utter false- "hoods, nor speak evil of women."‡

Thus were the words of the Koranic prophecy fulfilled, "When arrives Victory and Assistance from "God, and seest thou men enter in hosts the Religion "of God, then utter the praise of thy Lord and im- "plore His pardon, for He loveth to turn in mercy, "(to those who seek Him.)"§ Mohammed now saw his Mission all but completed. His principal disciples were dispatched in every direction to call the wild tribes of the desert to Islâm, with strict injunctions to preach peace and good will. Only in case of violence they were to defend themselves. These

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 821; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 134.

† Vid. Koran, chap. xii. 32.

‡ Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 192; Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 234.

§ Koran, chap. cx.; Comp. Zamakhshri (the Kasshâf), Egyp. Ed. pt. ii. pp. 490, 491.

injunctions were obeyed with only one exception. Khâlid the son of Walîd, who had been recently converted, seeing a party of the Banî-Jadhîma Bedouins advance towards him armed, ordered their heads to be cut off. His immediate followers killed a few of these Arabs, but the other Moslems interfering, further massacre was stopped. When the news of this wanton bloodshed was brought to the Prophet, he was much grieved, and raising his hands towards heaven, he cried, "O Lord! I am innocent "of what Khâlid has done." He immediately dispatched Ali to make every possible reparation to the Banî-Jadhîma for the outrage committed on them. It was a mission congenial to Ali's nature, and he executed it faithfully. Inquiring into the losses of each individual, he paid him in full. When every loss was made good, he distributed the remainder of the money he had brought, among the kinsmen of the victims and other members of the tribe, gladdening every heart, says the chronicler, by his gentleness and benevolence. Carrying with him the blessings of the whole people, he returned to the Prophet who overwhelmed him with thanks and praises.*

The formidable Bedouin tribes, the Hawâzin, the Thâkif and various others who pastured their flocks on the territories bordering Mecca, and some of

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 834, 835; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 195; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 141.

whom possessed strongly fortified towns like Tâyef, —unwilling to render obedience to the Moslems without contest, soon formed a league, with the intention of overwhelming Mohammed before he could make preparations to repulse their attack. His vigilance disappointed them. After a well-contested battle fought near Hunain, a deep and narrow defile about ten miles to the north-east of Mecca,* the Idolaters were defeated with great loss.† Separating their forces, one body of the enemy, consisting principally of the Thakîf, took refuge in their city of Tâyef, which only eight or nine years before, had driven the Prophet from within its walls with insults;—the rest fled to a fortified camp in the valley of Autâs. This was forced; and the families of the Hawâzin, with all their worldly effects—their flocks and herds—fell into the hands of the Moslems. Tâyef was then besieged, but after a few days Mohammed raised the siege, well-knowing that the pressure of circumstances would soon force the Tâyefites to submit without bloodshed. Returning to the place where the captured Hawâzin were left for safety, he found a deputation from this formidable tribe awaiting his

* Caussin de Perceval, vol iii. p. 248; in the Kâmûs, Hunain is merely said to be on the road from Mecca to Tâyef. Rodwell, however, in a note to his translation of the Koran, makes the distance only three miles. This surely is a mistake.

† This battle is referred to in the Koran, chap. ix. vv. 25-26. Ibn-Hishâm, p. 846; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 200, 201.

return, to solicit the restoration of their families. Aware of the unmanageable nature of the majority of his followers, and their sensitiveness regarding their rights,—Mohammed replied to the Bedouin deputies, that he could not force his people to abandon all the fruits of their victory, and that they must at least forfeit their effects if they would regain their families. To this they consented, and the following day, when Mohammed was offering the mid-day prayers* with his disciples ranged behind him, they came and repeated the request in the words the Prophet had directed them to use :—"We supplicate the Prophet to intercede with the Moslems, and the Moslems to intercede with the Prophet, to restore us our women and children." Mohammed replied to the deputies, "My own share, and that of the children of Abd-ul-Muttalib in the captives, I give you back at once." His disciples, catching his spirit, instantaneously followed his example, and six thousand people were in a moment set free.† This unexampled generosity won even the hearts of many of the Thakîf,‡ who tendered their allegiance and became earnest Moslems.

* Tabari says morning prayers, vol. iii. p. 155.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 877; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 206; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 155.

‡ The people of Tâyef were so called. The story told by Muir (vol. iv. p. 149), as a curious illustration of the Prophet's mode of life, is apocryphal. It must be remembered firstly that the division

In the division of the forfeited flocks and herds of the Hawâzin, larger numbers fell to the share of the newly converted Meccans than to the people of Medîna. Some of the Ansâr looked upon this as an act of partiality, and their discontent reaching the ears of the Prophet, he ordered them to be assembled. He then addressed them in these words:—"Ye "Ansâr! I have learnt the discourse ye hold among "yourselves. When I came amongst you, you were "wandering in darkness, and the Lord gave you the "right direction,—you were suffering, and He made "you happy,—at enmity among yourselves, and He "has filled your hearts with brotherly love and con- "cord. Was it not so, tell me?" "Indeed, it is "even as thou sayest," was the reply, "to the Lord "and His Prophet belong benevolence and grace." "Nay, by the Lord," continued the Prophet, "but "ye might have answered, and answered truly, for I "would have testified to its truth myself—'*Thou "camest to us rejected as an impostor, and we be- "lieved in thee; thou camest as a helpless fugitive, and "we assisted thee; poor, and an outcast, and we gave "thee an asylum; comfortless, and we solaced thee.*' "Ye Ansâr, why disturb your hearts because of the

of the booty had not taken place, and consequently the Prophet could not have presented any one with any part of it; and secondly, that he could only have given away as gift, part of his own share, but this he had promised to the deputies (before the division) to restore to the Hawâzin. The story therefore is utterly worthless.

" things of this life? Are ye not satisfied that others " should obtain the flocks and the camels, while ye " go back unto your homes with me in your midst? " By Him who holds my life in His hands, I shall " never abandon you. If all mankind went one " way and the Ansâr another, verily I would join the " Ansâr. The Lord be favourable unto them, and " bless them, and their children, and their children's " children!" At these words, says the chronicler, they all wept, until the tears ran down upon their beards. They all cried with one voice—" Yea, " Prophet of God, we are well satisfied with our " share." Thereupon they retired happy and contented.*

Mohammed soon after returned to Medîna.

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 886 ; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 208 ; Abulfeda, p. 82.

CHAPTER IX.

9 A.H., 20TH APRIL, 630—9TH APRIL, 631, A.C.

THE ninth year of the Hejira was noted for the embassies which flocked into Medîna from various parts of Arabia, to render homage to the true Faith and its great Teacher.

The Conquest of Mecca had decided in Arabia the fate of idolatry and its concomitant superstitions. The people who still regarded with veneration Lât and Uzzâ, were painfully awakened by the fall of their stronghold. Among the wild denizens of the desert, the moral force of the submission of the Meccans and the Thakîf was great. Deputations began to arrive from all sides to tender the allegiance and adherence of tribes, hitherto most inimical to the Moslems.* "The messengers and "embassies were quartered by Mahomet in the "houses of the chief citizens of Medîna, by whom "they were hospitably entertained. On departure, "they always received an ample sum for the ex- "penses of the road, and generally some further

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 934, et seq.; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 219.

"present corresponding with their rank. A written "treaty was often granted, guaranteeing the privi- "leges of the tribe, and not unfrequently a teacher "was sent back with the embassy to instruct the "newly converted people in the duties of Islâm, and "the requirements of Mahomet (sic); and to see "that every remnant of idolatry was obliterated."*

The Byzantines seem about this time to have indulged in those dreams of Arabian conquests, which had, once before, induced the founder of the Roman Empire to dispatch expeditions into that country.† Heraclius had returned to his dominions elated by his victories over the Persians. His political vision could not have been blind to the strange events which were taking place in Arabia, and he had probably not forgotten the repulse of his lieutenants, at the head of an enormous army, by a handful of Arabs. During his stay in Syria, he had directed his feudatories to collect an overwhelming force for the invasion of Arabia. The news of these preparations was soon brought to Medîna, and the Prophet directed the Moslems to prepare for repelling the Greek attack. It was the middle of the year (Rajjab, October 630] and the intensity of the heat, combined with the hardships of the journey, made many unwilling to join the expedition which was prepared to march against the Byzan-

* Muir, vol. iv. p. 181.

† I allude to the expedition of Ælius Gallus, under Augustus.

tines. The disinclination on the part of these Moslems was still further excited by the Munâfikîn, but after much exertion a small force was made ready. Accompanied by the Prophet, they marched towards the frontier. The Moslems, during their route, suffered severely from heat and thirst. After a long and painful march they reached Tabûk, a place situated midway between Medîna and Damascus,* where they halted. At Tabûk, Mohammed learnt that the Emperor of the Greeks was too much occupied at home to dream of attacking the Moslems, and finding nothing at that moment to threaten the safety of the Medinite commonwealth, he gave orders to the army to retrace its steps.† After a sojourn of twenty days at Tabûk, where they found abundance of water for themselves and forage for their famished beasts of burden, the Moslems returned to Medîna in the month of Ramadhân.‡

Soon after the arrival of the Prophet at Medîna, a deputation from Tâyef waited upon him to tender the submission of the people, and ask forgiveness

* Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. pp. 285, 286.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 904; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 215; Abulfedâ p. 85.

‡ According to C. de Perceval, middle of December, 630, A.C. The chapter ix. of the Koran treats vividly of these events. At Tabûk, Mohammed received the submission of many of the neighbouring chiefs. Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 215.

for their hitherto obstinate contumacy. In order, however, to give an idea of the change of feeling among the Tâyefites, it is necessary to point out some of the circumstances which led to it. The Tâyefite chief, Orwa, who had been the ambassador of the Koreish, in the affair of Hudeiba, had been so impressed by the truth of Islâm,* and the kindness and gentleness of its teacher, that very soon after the return of the Moslems to Medîna, he came to the Prophet and embraced his religion. "His "first generous impulse was to return to Tâyef, and "invite his fellow-citizens to share in the blessings "imparted by the new faith. Mahomet, well "knowing their bigotry and ignorance, warned him "repeatedly of the danger, but Orwa, presuming "on his popularity at Tâyef, persisted in the design. "Arriving in the evening, he made public his con- "version, and called upon the people to join him."† The following morning he again addressed them; but the frenzy of the rabble was roused by his words, and they murdered him. "He had offered "up, he said, his blood unto his Master for the sake "of his people: he blessed God with his dying "breath for the honour of martyrdom; and he "prayed his friends to bury him by the side of the "Moslems who had fallen at Hunain."‡ It was

* See *ante*, p. 121, note. † Muir, vol. iv. p. 203, 204.

‡ Ibid.; Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 914, 915; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 216.

after this that the Tâyefites, wearying of the hostility they had to wage with the tribes of the desert, sent the deputation to which we have referred above, to pray for forgiveness and permission to enter the circle of Islâm. They, however, begged for a short respite for their idols. First they asked two years, then one year, and then six months; but all to no purpose. "The grace of one month might surely be conceded," they urged as a last appeal. Mohammed was immovable. Islâm and the idols could not exist together. They then begged for exemption from the daily prayers. Mohammed replied that without devotion religion could be nothing.* Sorrowfully and at last they submitted to all that was required of them. They were excused, however, from destroying the idols with their own hands, and the well-known Abû Sufiân, the son of Harb, and Mughîra, the nephew of Orwa, were selected for that work. They executed their commission amidst uproarious cries of despair and grief from the women of Tâyef.†

The tribe of Tay had about this time proved recalcitrant, and their disaffection was fostered by the idolatrous priesthood. A small force was dispatched under Ali, to reduce them into obedience and to destroy their idols. Adî, the son of the famous Hâtim, whose generosity and munificence has been sung by

* Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 217.

† Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 917, 918; Tabari, vol. iii. pp. 161-163.

poets and minstrels throughout the Eastern world, was about this time the chief of his tribe. On the approach of Ali, he fled to Syria; but his sister, with some of the principal men of the clan, fell into the hands of the Moslems. They were conducted, with every mark of respect and sympathy, to Medîna. Mohammed at once set the daughter of Hâtim and her people at liberty, and bestowed on them many valuable gifts. She proceeded to Syria, and told her brother of the nobleness of Mohammed. Touched by gratitude, Adî hastened to Medîna to tender his thanks, and soon embraced Islâm. Returning to his people, he persuaded them to abjure idolatry; and the Banî Tay, once so wedded to heathenism, became thenceforth devoted followers of the religion of Mohammed.*

Towards the end of this year, during the month of pilgrimage, Abû Bakr proceeded to Mecca to perform the usual ceremonies. Ali, who accompanied the pilgrims, was commissioned by the Prophet to read a proclamation, forbidding the Idolaters to enter the precincts of the Kaaba, a place consecrate to the God of purity. On the day of the great sacrifice,

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 948, 949; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 218; Tabari, vol. iii. pp. 171-174. The conversion of Adî occurred in Rabi II. of the 9th year (July-August, 630 A.C.), and, accordingly, ought to have been placed before the expedition to Tabûk. But I have followed the order of the Arab historians. The Persian poet, Sâdî, has some beautiful lines in the Bûstân concerning this touching episode of Hâtim's daughter.

(Yeûm-un-Nahr), Ali read aloud to the assembled multitudes the words which struck at once at the heart of idolatry, and the immoralities attendant upon it: "No idolater shall, after this year, perform "the pilgrimage; no one shall make the circuit (of "the Temple) naked;* whoever hath a treaty with "the Prophet, it shall continue binding till its ter- "mination; for the rest, four months are allowed to "every man to return to his territories; after that "there will exist no obligation on the Prophet, ex- "cept towards those with whom treaties have been "concluded."†

This "Declaration of Discharge," as it is styled by Moslem writers, was a manifestation of far-sighted wisdom on the part of the Prophet. It was impossible that the state of society and morals which then existed could have continued; the Idolaters, mixing year after year with the Moslem pilgrims, if allowed to perform the lascivious and degrading ceremonies of their cultus, would soon have undone what Mohammed had so laboriously accomplished. History had already seen another gifted yet uncultured branch of the same stock as the Arabs, settling among Idolaters; their leaders had tried to preserve the worship of Jehovah by wholesale butcheries of the worshippers of Baal. They had failed miserably.

* Alluding to a disgraceful custom of the idolatrous Arabs.

† Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 921, 922; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 222; Abulfedâ, p. 87.

The Israelites had not only succumbed under the evil influences which surrounded them, but had even surpassed those whom they at first despised, in the practice of abominations which cannot be named. Was Mohammed to follow the example of these ancient Semites, or even the later examples afforded by the followers of Christianity, who persecuted each other for the sake of bringing about a harmony in the human conception concerning the nature of some bread and wine? No. With the inspiration of genius Mohammed adopted means, seemingly harsh, but yet merciful and benignant in their ultimate tendency. The vast concourse of pilgrims who had listened to Ali, returned to their homes, and before the following year was well over, the majority of them were Moslems.

NOTE TO CHAPTER IX.

It is a great mistake to suppose that Ali read any continuous portion of the Koran on this occasion. Most probably the "Declaration" took its origin from the strong and inspired feeling expressed in the chapter which conserves its spirit (chap. ix.). This chapter refers to so many incidents, which occurred at different periods, that it is hardly probable that Ali could have made it the text of a continued discourse. Sir W. Muir evidently looks upon this declaration as the enunciation of "uncompromising warfare." In this, as in other things, he is carried away by his Christian prejudice against the religion of Mohammed, even to the length of looking with favourable eyes upon the gross idolatry of the Arabs, (vol. iv. p. 211). He also takes occasion to mention that Mohammed "having so long de-

ceived the Jews and Christians with vain professions of attachment to their scriptures, now finally parted from them" (p. 212). Mohammed had about this time denounced in bitter terms the shameless iniquities of the Jews and Christians (of those days), and in the Koran their monks and priests were justly and truly called "the devourers of "the wealth of the people in vanity;" (chap. ix. v. 34). This, according to Sir W. Muir, is deceiving the Jews and Christians, and finally breaking with them!

CHAPTER X.

10 A.H. 9TH APRIL, 631—29TH MARCH, 632 A.C.

DURING this year, as in the preceding, numerous embassies poured into Medîna, from every part of Arabia, to testify to the adhesion of their chiefs and their tribes. To the teachers, whom Mohammed sent into the different provinces, he invariably gave the following injunction:—"Deal gently with the people "and be not harsh; cheer them, and contemn them "not. And ye will meet with many People of the "Books,* who will question thee, what is the key to "Heaven? Reply to them [the key to Heaven "is] to testify to the truth of God, and to do good "works."†

The Mission of Mohammed was now achieved. In the midst of a nation steeped in barbarism, a Prophet had arisen, "to rehearse unto them the "signs of God, to sanctify them, to teach them the "scriptures and knowledge, them who before had

* Christians, Jews, and probably Zoroastrians.

† Ibn-Hishâm, p. 907; he has, however, preserved Mohammed's directions only in part.

"been in utter darkness."* He found them sunk in a degrading and sanguinary superstition, and he inspired them with the belief in one sole God of Truth and Love. He saw them disunited and engaged in perpetual conflict with each other, and he united them by the ties of brotherhood and charity. "From time "beyond memory," to quote Muir, "Mecca, and the "whole Peninsula had been steeped in spiritual "torpor. The slight and transient influences of "Judaism, Christianity, or Philosophy, upon the "Arab mind, had been but as the ruffling here and "there of the surface of a quiet lake; all remained "still and motionless below. The people were sunk "in superstition, cruelty, and vice. It was a common "practice for the eldest son to marry his father's "widows,† inherited as property with the rest of "the estate. Pride had introduced among them, "as it has among the Hindoos, the crime of female "infanticide.‡ . . . . . The life "to come and retribution of good and evil, were, "as motives of action, practically unknown."§ Only a few years ago, this was the condition of Arabia. What a change had these few years witnessed! It seemed as if the angel of Heaven had passed over

* Koran, chap. lxii. vv. 2-5.

† This custom was branded in the Koran as the *Nikâh-al-makt*, "marriage of abomination," or "abominable marriage."

‡ This custom was reprehended in the most burning terms in the Koran.

§ Muir, vol. ii. p. 270.

the land, and breathed harmony and love into the hearts of those who had before been engrossed in the most inhuman practices of semi-barbarism. What had once been a moral desert, where all laws, moral and divine, were contemned and infringed without remorse, was transformed into a garden. Idolatry, with its nameless abominations, was utterly destroyed. Long had Christianity and Judaism tried to wean the Arab tribes from their gross superstitions, but it was not "till they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian Prophet," that they became conscious of the presence of the God of Truth overshadowing the universe with His power and love. Henceforth their aims are not of this earth alone; there is something beyond the grave,—higher, purer, and diviner,—calling them to the practice of charity, goodness, justice, and universal love. God is not merely the God of to-day or to-morrow,—carved out of wood or stone, but the mighty, loving, merciful, though unseen, Creator of the world. Mohammed was the source, under Providence, of this new awakening,—the bright fountain from which flowed the stream of their hopes of eternity; and to him they paid a fitting obedience and reverence. They were all animated with one desire, namely, to serve God in truth and purity, to obey His laws reverently in all the affairs of life. The truths and maxims, the precepts which, from time to time during the past twenty years, Moham-

med had delivered to his followers, were embalmed in their hearts, and had become the ruling principles of every action. Law and morality were united. "Never, since the days when primitive Christianity "startled the world from its sleep and waged a "mortal conflict with Heathenism, had men seen "the like arousing of spiritual life,—the like faith "that suffered sacrifice and took joyfully the "spoiling of goods for conscience' sake."*

The Mission of Mohammed was now accomplished, and in this fact—the fact of the whole work being achieved in his life-time—lies his distinctive superiority over the prophets, sages, and philosophers of other times and countries;—Jesus, Moses, Zoroaster, Sakya-Muni, Plato, all had their notions of Realms of God, their Republics, their Ideas—through which degraded humanity was to be elevated into a new moral life. All had departed from this world with their aspirations unfulfilled, their bright visions unrealized; or had bequeathed the task of elevating their fellow-men to sanguinary disciples or monarch-pupils.† It was reserved for Mohammed to fulfil his mission and that of his predecessors. It was reserved for him alone to see accomplished the work of amelioration. No royal

* Muir, vol. ii. p. 269.

† A Josuah among the Israelites; an Asoka among the Buddhists; a Darius among the Zoroastrians; a Constantine among the Christians.

disciple came to his assistance with edicts to enforce the new teachings. May not the Moslem justly say, the entire work was the work of Providence?

When the hosts of Arabia came flocking to join his faith, Mohammed felt his work was accomplished, and under the impression of his approaching end, he determined to make a farewell pilgrimage to Mecca. On the 25th of Dzu'l-Kâd, the Prophet left Medîna with an immense concourse of Moslems.* On his arrival at Mecca, and before completing all the rites of the pilgrimage, he addressed the assembled multitude from the top of the *Jabal-ul-Arafât*, in the words which yet live in the hearts of all Moslems.

"Ye People! Listen to my words, for I know "not whether another year will be vouchsafed to "me after this year to find myself amongst you.

"Your lives and property are sacred and invio- "lable amongst one another until ye appear before "the Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for "all; and remember ye shall have to appear before "your Lord, who shall demand from you an account "of all your actions. . . . . Ye people, ye have "rights over your wives, and your wives have rights "over you. . . . . Treat your wives with kindness. ". . . . Verily ye have taken them on the security "of God, and have made their persons lawful unto "you by the words of God."

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 966; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 230.

"And your slaves! See that ye feed them with "such food as ye eat yourselves; and clothe them "with the stuff ye wear; and if they commit a "fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then "part from them, for they are the servants of the "Lord, and are not to be harshly treated."

"Ye People! Listen to my words and under- "stand the same. Know that all Moslems are "brothers unto one another. Ye are one brother- "hood. Nothing which belongs to another is law- "ful unto his brother, unless freely given out of "good-will. Guard yourselves from committing "injustice."*

"Let him that is present tell it unto him that is "absent. Haply, he that shall be told may remem- "ber better than he who hath heard it."

Towards the conclusion of his discourse, Mohammed, overpowered by the sight of the intense enthusiasm of the people as they drank in his words, exclaimed, "O Lord! I have delivered my "message, and accomplished my work." The assembled hosts below with one voice cried, "Yea, "verily, thou hast." "O Lord! I beseech thee, "bear thou witness unto it."

With these words the Prophet finished his address, which, tradition reports, was remarkable for its length, its fervid eloquence, and enthusiasm.

Soon after, the necessary rites of the pilgrimage

* Ibn-Hishâm, pp. 968, 969.

being finished, the Prophet returned with his followers to Medîna.

The last year of Mohammed's life was spent in that city. In the early part of the year, he settled the organisation of the provinces and tribal communities, which now formed the component parts of the Moslem federation. Preparations were also commenced to enforce from the Byzantines the long-delayed reparation for the murder of the envoy in Syria; but this, as well as the punishment of several pretenders who had started up in the outlying provinces, claiming Divine commission for their reign of licentiousness and plunder,* was stopped by the severe illness of the Prophet, and the evident signs of his approaching dissolution. The poison given to him by the Jewess at Khaibar had slowly penetrated his system, and its effects now became visible.

The last days of the Prophet were remarkable for the calmness and serenity of his mind, which enabled him, though weak and feeble, to preside at the public prayers until within three days of his death. One night, at midnight, he went to the place where his old companions were lying in the slumber of death, and prayed and wept by their tombs, invoking God's blessings for his "companions resting in peace." He chose Ayesha's house, close to the mosque, for

* For a full account of these Pretenders, see C. de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 309, et seq.

his stay during his illness, and as long as his strength lasted, took part in the public prayers. The last time he appeared in the mosque, he was supported by his two cousins, Ali, and Fadhl the son of Abbâs. A smile of inexpressible softness and sweetness played over his countenance, and was remarked by all who surrounded him. Placed on a seat (after the usual praises and hymns to God), he addressed the multitude thus :—"Moslems, "if I have wronged any one of you, here I am to "answer for it; if I owe aught to any one, all I may "happen to possess belongs to you." Upon hearing this, a man in the crowd rose and claimed three dirhems which he had given to a poor man at the Prophet's request. They were immediately paid back with the words—"Better to blush in this world "than in the next." The Prophet then prayed and implored heaven's mercy for those present, and for those who had fallen in the persecutions of their enemies; and recommended to all his people the observance of religious duties and the practice of a life of peace and goodwill, and concluded by the following words of the Koran, "The dwelling of the "other life we will give unto them, who do not seek "to exalt themselves on earth or to do wrong; for "the happy issue shall attend the pious."*

* Koran, chap. xxviii. v. 83; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. p. 241; Tabari, vol. iii. p. 207, et seq. Both Tabari and Ibn-al-Athîr say that the latter part of the exhortation was addressed to the company who

After this time Mohammed never again appeared at the public prayers. His strength now rapidly failed. At noon on Monday, 12th of Rabi I, 8th June 632 A.C. whilst praying earnestly in whisper, the spirit of the Great Prophet took flight to the "blessed companionship on high."* . . . . . .

The Arabian writers dwell with the proudest satisfaction on the graces and intellectual gifts of the son of Abdullah. His courteousness to the great, his affability to the humble, and his dignified bearing to the presumptuous, procured him universal respect and admiration. His countenance reflected the benevolence of his heart. Deeply read in the volume of nature, though ignorant of letters, with an expansive heart elevated by deep communion with the Soul of the Universe,—he was gifted with the power of influencing equally the learned and the unlearned. Withal there was a majesty in his face, an air of genius which impressed all who came in contact with him, with a sense of veneration and love towards him.†

"Eminently unpractical in all the common things "of life, he was gifted with mighty powers of imagi-

visited Mohammed in the house of Ayesha. Ibn-Hishâm and some others, followed generally by European writers, say that it was addressed at the time when not able to preside himself at the mosque, he asked Abû Bakr to lead the prayers.

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 1009; Ibn-al-Athîr, vol. ii. pp. 244, 245; Abulfeda, p. 91. Comp. Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 322, and note.

† Mishkat, Bk. xxiv. chap. 3, pt. 2.

"nation, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement "of feeling. 'He is more modest than a virgin "behind her curtain,' it was said of him. He was "most indulgent to his inferiors, and would never "allow his awkward little page to be scolded, what-"ever he did. 'Ten years,' said Anas, his servant, "'was I about the Prophet, and he never said so much "as "Uff" to me.'* He was very affectionate "towards his family. One of his boys died on his "breast, in the smoky house of the nurse, a black-"smith's wife. He was very fond of children. He "would stop them in the streets and pat their little "cheeks. He never struck any one in his life. The "worst expression he ever made use of in conversa-"tion was, 'What has come to him?—may his fore-"head be darkened with mud!' When asked to "curse some one, he replied, I have not been sent to "curse, but to be a Mercy to mankind."†

"'He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, "accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended "his own clothes, milked his goats, and waited upon "himself,' relates summarily another tradition.‡ "He never first withdrew his hand out of another's "palm, and turned not before the other had turned. "His hand, we read elsewhere—and traditions like "these give a good index of what the Arabs ex-

* Mishkât, bk. xxiv. chap. 4, pt. 1. † Ibid.

‡ Mishkât, Bk. xxiv. chap. 4, pt. 2.

"pected their Prophet to be—was the most generous, "his breast the most courageous, his tongue the "most truthful; he was the most faithful protector "of those he protected; the sweetest and most "agreeable in conversation; those who saw him "were suddenly filled with reverence; those who "came near him loved him; they who described him "would say, 'I have never seen his like either "before or after.' He was of great taciturnity, and "when he spoke, he spoke with emphasis and de- "liberation, and no one could ever forget what he "said."* "Modesty and kindness, patience, self- "denial, and generosity pervaded his conduct, and "riveted the affections of all around him." . . "With "the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised ten- "derly." . . . "He shared his food even in times of "scarcity with others; and was sedulously solicitous "for the personal comfort of every one about him."†

He loved the poor and respected them. Many of those who had no home or shelter of their own, slept at night in the mosque contiguous to his house. Each evening it was his custom to invite some of them to partake of his humble fare. The others be-

* I have given the above passage, *in extenso*, from Mr. Deutsch's Essay on Islâm, in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 254, as much for the eloquent words, in which he has clothed the traditions, as for showing the opinion of one of the greatest thinkers of Europe regarding Mohammed's character. The traditions themselves I have verified, and given the references where wanted. Compare also Abulfedâ, p. 94.

† Muir, vol. iv. 305.

came the guests of his principal disciples.* His conduct towards the most bitter of his enemies was marked by a noble clemency and forbearance. Stern, almost to severity, to the enemies of the State —mockings, affronts, outrages and persecutions towards himself were, in the hour of triumph—synonymous with the hour of trial to the human heart—all buried in oblivion, and forgiveness was extended to the worst criminal.†

Mohammed was extremely simple in his habits. His eating and drinking, his dress and his furniture, retained to the very last a character of patriarchal simplicity. Many a time, Abû Huraira reports, had the Prophet to go without a meal. Dates and water frequently formed his only nourishment. Often, for months together, no fire could be lighted in his house from scantiness of means. God, say the Moslem historians, had indeed put before him the key to the treasures of this world, but he refused it.

* Abulfedâ, p. 99; Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 334.

† Compare Muir, vol. iv. pp. 306, 307.

CHAPTER XI.

In order to understand the primary doctrines of the religion of Mohammed, the first great point to examine is the true significance of the word Islâm, for on this hinge some of the most important points involved in the science of religion. *Salm* (*salama*, in the first and fourth conjugations) means in the first instance to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, to have paid up, *to be at perfect peace*, and, finally, to hand one's self over to Him with whom peace is made. The noun derived from it means peace, greeting, safety, salvation.* "The "word thus implies absolute submission to God's "will—as generally assumed—neither in the first in- "stance, nor exclusively, but means, on the con- "trary, one who strives after righteousness with his "own strength."

The essence of the great principles thus embodied in Islâm is set forth in the second chapter of the Koran:—"There is no doubt in this book. A "guidance to the pious, who believe without seeing

* See the Kâmûs.

" (or, in the Unseen), who observe the prayers, and " distribute (charity) out of what we have bestowed " on them; and who believe in that which We have " commissioned thee with, and in that We com- " missioned others with, before thee, and who have " assurance in the life to come;—these have received " the direction of their Lord."*

The principal bases on which the entire system of the Islâmic laws is built, are, firstly (1) a belief in the unity, immateriality, power, mercy and supreme love of the Creator; (2) charity and brotherhood among mankind; (3) subjugation of the passions; (4) the outpouring of a grateful heart to the Giver of all gifts; and (5) accountability for human actions in another existence. The grand and noble conceptions, expressed in the Koran, of the power and love of the Deity surpass everything of their kind. The Unity of God, His immateriality, His majesty, His mercy form the constant and never-ending theme of the most eloquent and soul-stirring passages. The flow of life, light and spirituality never ceases. But throughout, there is no trace of dogmatism. Appeal is made to the inner consciousness of man, to his intuitive reason alone.

But in order to elucidate more fully the distinctive character of Mohammed's teachings regarding the Divinity, a brief glance at the state of opinion among the various religious sects in Arabia, will not be amiss.

* Koran, chap. ii. v. 1-6.

Among the heathen Arabs, the idea of Godhead varied according to the culture of the individual or of the clan. With some it rose (comparatively speaking) to the "divinisation" or deification of nature; among others it fell to simple fetishism, the adoration of a piece of dough, a stick, or a stone. Some believed in a future life; others had no idea of it whatever. The heathen Arabs had their groves, their oracle-trees, their priestesses like the Syro-Phœnicians. Phallic worship was not unknown to them; and the generative powers received adoration, like the hosts of heaven, under monuments of stone and wood. The wild denizens of the desert, then as now, could not be impervious to the idea of some unseen hand driving the blasts which swept over whole tracts, or forming the beautiful visions which rose before the traveller to lure him to destruction. But above all, there floated an intangible, unrealised conception of a superior Deity, the Lord of All.*

The Jews, those great conservators of the monotheistic idea, as they have been generally regarded in history, probably might have assisted in the formation of this conception. But they themselves showed what strange metamorphoses can take place in the thoughts of a nation, when not aided by a historical and rationalistic element in their religious code.

* Shahrastâni, *in loco.* Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. p. 348.

The Jews had entered Arabia at various times, and under the pressure of various circumstances. Naturally, the ideas of the different bodies of emigrants, refugees or colonists would vary much. The ideas of the men driven out by the Assyrians or Babylonians would be more anthropomorphic, more anthropopathic, than of those who fled before Vespasian, Trajan, or Hadrian. The characteristics which had led the Israelites repeatedly to lapse into idolatry in their original homes, when Seers were in their midst to denounce their backslidings, would hardly preserve them from the heathenism of their Arab brothers. With an idea of "the God of Abraham," they would naturally combine a materialistic conception of the Deity, and hence we find them rearing "a statue re-"presenting Abraham with the ram beside him, ready "for sacrifice," in the interior of the Kaaba.*

Amongst the later comers, the Shammaites and the Zealots formed by far the largest proportion. Among them, the worship of the law verged upon idolatry, and the Scribes and Rabbins claimed a respect almost approaching adoration. They believed themselves to be the guardians of the people, the preservers of law and tradition, "living exem-"plars and mirrors, in which the true mode of life, "according to the law, was preserved."† They looked upon themselves as the "flower of the nation,"

* Syed Ahmed, Essays on the Life of Mohammed, Ess. iii. p. 11.

† Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. ii. p. 308.

and they were considered, through their intercourse with God, to possess the gift of prophecy. In fact, by their people as well as by themselves, they were regarded as the prime favourites of God.* The veneration of the Jews for Moses went so far, says Josephus, that they reverenced his name next to that of God; and this veneration they transferred to Ezra, the Restorer of national life and law, under the Kyânian dynasty.†

Besides, the mass of the Jews had never, probably, thoroughly abandoned the worship of the Teraphim, a sort of household gods in a human form, consulted on all occasions as domestic oracles, or regarded perhaps more as guardian penates.‡ This worship must have been strengthened by contact with the heathen Arabs.

The Christian had a nobler exemplar before him. The teachings of the Prophet of Nazareth should have elevated him to a purer conception of the Deity. But six centuries had surrounded that noble figure with those myths which, in opposition to his own words, resolved him into a manifestation—an hypostasis—of the Godhead. The vulgar masses, unable to comprehend or realise this wonderful mixture of Neopythagorianism, Platonism, Judæo-Hellenistic philosophy, and the teachings of Jesus,—reverted to the primitive worship of relics and of

* Josephus, Antiquities, xvii. 24. † Ezra, vii. 10, *et seq.*

‡ Judges xviii. 14.

a tinselled goddess, who represented the pure Mother of Jesus.* But this degradation of human reason was not confined to the Christians of Arabia. Even at the Council of Nice, which definitely settled the nature of Jesus, there were men who held that besides "God the Father," there were two other Gods—Christ and the Virgin Mary.†

Against all the absurdities we have described above, the life-aim of Mohammed was directed. Addressing, with the voice of Truth, inspired by deep communion with the God of the universe, the fetish worshippers of the Arabian tribes on one side, and the followers of degraded Christianity and Judaism on the other, Mohammed, that "master of speech," as he has been so nobly called, never tra-

* The Collyridians introduced the Virgin Mary for God or worshipped her as such, offering her a sort of twisted cake called *collyris*, whence the sect had its name.—Sale, Prel. Discourse, p. 35. See also Mosheim, vol. i. p. 432.

† Mosheim's Ecclesiastical Hist. vol. i. p. 432. The Romanists even now, it is said, call the mother of Jesus the *complement* of the Trinity. Comp. also Hallam, Const. Hist. of England, chap. ii. p. 75. From the text it will be seen how much truth there is in the assertion, that Islâm derived "everything good it contains" from Judaism or Christianity. "It has been the fashion," says Deutsch, "to ascribe whatever is 'good' in Mohammedanism to Chris-
"tianity. We fear this theory is not compatible with the results of
"honest investigation. For of Arabian Christianity, at the time of
"Mohammed, the less said perhaps the better. By the side of it
". . . . even modern Amharic Christianity, of which we possess
"such astounding accounts, appears pure and exalted."—*Quarterly Review*, No. 254, p. 315.

velled out of the province of reason, and made them all blush at the monstrousness of their beliefs. Mohammed, the grand apostle of the unity of God, thus stands forth in history in noble conflict with the retrogressive tendency of man to associate other beings with the Creator of the universe.*

Ever and anon in the Koran occur passages, fervid and burning, like the following:—"Your "God is one God; there is no God but He, the "most merciful. In the creation of the heaven and "earth, and the alternation of night and day, and "in the ship which saileth on the sea, laden with "what is profitable to mankind; and in the rain-"water which God sendeth from heaven, quicken-"ing again the dead earth, and the animals of all "sorts which cover its surface; and in the change "of winds, and the clouds balanced between heaven "and earth,—are signs to people of understanding; "yet some men take idols beside God, and love "them as with the love due to God."† What a depth of sympathy towards those benighted people do these words convey. Again:—"It is He who "causeth the lightning to appear unto you, (to

* In combating "that fundamental tenet of Christianity, the sonship of Christ," it was not Mohammed's province to decide whether a Demiurge, a Logos (half-human half-divine, half-mythic half-historical) is required or not as mediator or communicator between God and man. He looked to the historical character alone of Jesus, and the effects of the cultus among the surrounding people.

† Koran, chap. ii. vv. 158-160.

"strike) fear and (to raise) hope; and formeth the "pregnant clouds. The thunder celebrateth His "praise, and the angels also. . . . . He launches "his thunderbolts, and striketh therewith whom "He pleaseth while they dispute concerning Him. ". . . . It is He who of right ought to be in- "voked; and those (the idols) whom they invoke "besides Him, shall not respond to them at all; "otherwise than as he, who stretcheth forth his "hands to the water that it may ascend to his "mouth, when it cannot ascend (thither)."* "He "hath created the heavens and the earth to (mani- "fest His) justice. Far be that from Him which "they associate with Him. He hath created man ". . . . and behold he is a professed disputer. He "hath likewise created the cattle for you. And "they are likewise a credit unto you, when they come "trooping home at evening time or are led forth to "pasture in the morn. . . . . And He hath sub- "jected the night and day to your service; and the "sun, and the moon, and the stars are all bound by "his laws. . . . . It is He who hath subjected the "sea unto you, and thou seest the ships ploughing "the deep . . . . and that ye might render thanks. ". . . . Shall He therefore who createth be as he "who createth not? Do ye not therefore take "heed? If ye were to reckon up the blessings of

* Koran, chap. xiii. vv. 13-15.

"God, ye shall not be able to compute their num-
"ber; God is surely gracious and merciful. He
"knoweth that which ye conceal and that which ye
"publish. But those (the idols) whom ye invoke,
"besides the Lord, create nothing, but are them-
"selves created. They are dead and not living."*

And so this wonderful book goes on, appealing to the noble feelings of man,—his inner consciousness and his moral sense, in order to prove and manifest the enormity of idolatrous beliefs. There is scarcely a chapter which does not contain some fervid passages on the power, mercy, and unity of God. Occasionally, however, come denunciations on the Christians and the Jews, for the superstitious rites they practised in defiance of the warnings of their teachers. The fire of religious zeal, which had burned in the bosoms of Isaiah and Jeremiah, was rekindled in the breast of another and a far greater man. He denounces; but above the wail, the cry of agony at the degradation of humanity, is heard the voice of hope, sounding through eternity.

The Koran severely censures the Jews for their "worship of false gods and idols," the teraphim before referred to, and for their exaggerated reverence for the memory of Ezra: the Christians, for their adoration of Jesus and his mother. "Hast thou "not seen those to whom a portion of the Scriptures "have been given? They believe in false gods and

* Koran, chap. xvi. vv. 3-18.

"idols. They say to the unbelievers, they are "better directed in the right way than those that "believe (the Moslems)."* "The Jews say, Ezra "is the son of God; the Christians say, Christ is "the son of God. . . . . May God resist "them. How infatuated they are. They take their "priests and their monks for their lords besides "God. . . . They seek to extinguish the light of "God with their mouths."† . . . "The Jews and "the Christians say, We are the children of God, and "His beloved."‡ . . . "Many of those unto whom "the scriptures have been given,§ desire to render "you again unbelievers, after ye have believed. . . . "Be constant in prayer, and give alms; and what "good ye have sent before you for your souls, ye "shall find it with God." . . . "They say, Verily "none shall enter paradise, except those who are "Jews or Christians. . . . Say, Produce your proof "if ye speak the truth. Nay, but he who directeth "himself towards God, and doth that which is right, "he shall have his reward with his Lord."‖

"O ye who have received the scriptures exceed not "the just bounds in your religion; neither say of "God otherwise than the truth. Verily, Christ Jesus "the son of Mary is the apostle of God, and His

* Koran, chap. iv. v. 49.

† Koran, chap. ix. vv. 30-32.

‡ Koran, chap. v. v. 21.

§ The Jews and Christians, and probably the Zoroastrians.

‖ Koran, chap. ii. vv. 105, 106.

"Word. Believe therefore in God and His apostles "and say not, There are three Gods; forbear this. . . . "Christ doth not proudly disdain to be a servant "unto God."*

The following passage shows the feeling with which such religious conceptions were regarded:—"They "say the God of Mercy hath begotten a son (or "issue). Now have ye uttered a grievous thing; and "it wanteth but little that the heaven should be torn "open, and that the earth cleave asunder, and the "mountains fall down, for that they attribute children "unto the Merciful, whereas it is not meet for God "to have children. Verily, there is none in heaven "or on earth, but shall approach the Merciful as His "servant. He encompasseth them. . . ."†

But the inspired Preacher does not confound the good with the bad. His mission is to proclaim the truth, and he must give all men their due. "Yet "they are not all alike; there are of those who have "received the scriptures, upright people; they "meditate on the signs of God in the night season, "and worship; they believe in God, and the last "day; and command that which is just; and forbid "that which is unjust, and zealously strive to excel "in good works; these are of the righteous."‡

* Koran, chap. iv. vv. 169, 170.
† Koran, chap. xix. vv. 91-94.
‡ Koran, chap. iii. vv. 109, 110.

The mercy of the Almighty is one of the grandest themes of the Koran. The very name [Ar-Rahmân] by which God is often distinguished and invoked, expresses a deep, all-penetrating conviction regarding the mercy of the Deity.*

* Koran, chap. iii. verse 124; chap. xxv. verse 50; chap. xxviii. verse 74; chap. xlii. verse 3, etc. etc.

CHAPTER XII.

For the conservation of a true religious spirit,—a spirit frequently wanting in other creeds, Mohammed attached to his religion certain practical duties, of which the following are the principal: (1) prayer; (2) fasting; (3) almsgiving; and (4) pilgrimage.

Man's consciousness of a supreme, all-seeing, all-pervading Power; his helplessness in the eternal conflict of nature; his sense of benefaction; all lead him to pour out the overflowing sentiments of his heart, in words of gratitude and love, or repentance and solicitation to One who is ever-wakeful and merciful. Prayers are only the utterances of the sentiments which fill the human heart. All these emotions, however, are the results of a superior development. The savage, if supplications do not answer his purpose, resorts to the castigation of his fetish. But all religious systems, with any organic element in them, have recognised, in some shape or other, the efficacy of prayer. In most, however, the theurgic character predominates over the moral; in some the moral idea is entirely wanting.

The Mago-Zoroastrian and the Sabean lived in an atmosphere of prayer. The Zoroastrian prayed when he sneezed, when he cut his nails or hair, while preparing meals, day and night, at the lighting of lamps, &c. Ormuzd was first invoked, and then not only heaven, earth, the elements and stars, but trees, especially the moon-plant,* and beasts. The formulæ were often to be repeated, as many as twelve hundred times.† The moral idea, however pure in some cases, would be perfectly eliminated from the minds of the common people. But even the sort of spiritual life, enjoyed by exceptional minds, was in many cases monopolised by the ministers of religion. The barriers of especial holiness which divided the priesthood from the laity, shut out the latter, more or less, from all spiritual enjoyments of a nobler type. The Magians, like the Ophici, had two forms of worship, or rather two modes of understanding the objects of worship; one esoteric, especially reserved for the priestly classes, the other exoteric, in which alone the vulgar could participate.‡

* Called *Soma* by the Sanscritic, and *Homa* or *Haoma* by the Zend races.

† Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. i. p. 398. The Zend-Avesta itself is a grand repertory of prayers, hymns, invocations, &c. to a multitude of deities, among whom Ormuzd ranks first. In fact it is a book of liturgies. Comp. Clarke, Ten Great Religions, pp. 187 and 202.

‡ Reland, Dissertationes Miscellanæ, part i. p. 191. Shahrastâni.

The Mosaic law contained no ordinances respecting prayers; only on the payment of tithes to the priests, and the domestic solemnity of the presentation of the firstlings, was there a prescribed formula of prayer and acknowledgment, when the father of the house, on the strength of his having obediently performed the behests of the law, supplicated blessings from Jehovah on Israel, "even, as He had sworn unto their fathers."* But with the rise of a more spiritual idea of the Deity, among the people and the teachers, and the decline of an uncompromising anthropomorphism, the real nature of prayer, as the medium of intercommunication between God and man, began to be understood. Tradition and custom, in default of any express regulation by the law, made the Jews at last, as Dollinger says, a people of prayer.† Three hours daily were consecrated to devotional exercises, viz. nine, twelve, and three o'clock. The necessity, however, for the service of priests, combined with the absence of any positive precedent coming down from the Lawgiver himself, tended to make prayer, in the majority of cases, merely mechanical. Phylacteries were in use in the time of Jesus, and the Koran reproaches the Jews in bitter terms for "selling the signs of God."‡

The teachings of Jesus, representing a later development of the religious faculty in man, recognised

* Deut. xxvi. 12-15.
† Dollinger, vol. ii. p. 372.
‡ Koran, chap. ii. v. 38.

the true character of prayer. He consecrated the practice by his own example.* The early disciples, in the true spirit of their Master, laid great stress on the habit of devotion and thanksgiving to God.† But the want of some definite rule for the guidance of the masses in process of time left them completely adrift in all that regarded the practice of devotion, and under subjection to the priests, who monopolised the office of regulating the number, length, and the terminology of prayers. Hence missals, liturgies, councils and convocations to settle articles of faith and matters of conscience; hence also the mechanical worship of droning monks, and the hebdomadal flocking into churches and chapels on one day in the week, to make up for the deficiency of spiritual food during the other six; hence also the "presbyter," who, merely a "servant" at first,‡ came to regard himself as "the lord of the spiritual heritage" bequeathed by Jesus.

All these evils had culminated to a point in the 7th century, when the Prophet of Arabia began to preach a reformed religon. In instituting prayers, Mohammed recognised the yearning of the human soul to pour out its love and gratitude to the God of Truth, and by making the practice of devotion periodic, he impressed that disciplinary character on

* Luke, xi. 1-4. † *e. g.* Eph. vi. 18; Coloss. i. 12, *et seq.*
‡ Moshcim, Eccl. History (Maclaine's Transl.) vol. i. p. 99, *et seq.*

the observance of prayer, which keeps the thought from wandering into the regions of the material.* The formulæ, consecrated by his example and practice, whilst sparing the Islâmic world the evils of contests regarding liturgies, leave to the individual worshipper the amplest scope for the most heartfelt outpouring of devotion and humility before the Almighty Presence.

The value of prayer, as the means of moral elevation, and the purification of the heart, has been clearly set forth by the Koran :—

"Rehearse that which hath been revealed unto "thee of the Book, and be constant at prayer, for "prayer preserveth from crimes; and from that "which is blameable; and the remembering of God "is surely a most sacred duty."†

The forms of the supplicatory hymns, consecrated by the example of Mohammed, evince the beauty of the moral element in the teachings of Islâm :—

"O Lord! I supplicate thee for firmness in faith, "and direction towards rectitude; and to assist me "in being grateful to thee; and in adoring thee in "every good way; and I supplicate thee for an inno- "cent heart, which shall not incline to wickedness; "and I supplicate thee for a true tongue; and for "that virtue which thou knowest; and I pray thee

* Comp. Oelsner, Des Effets de la Religion de Mohammed, p. 6.
† Koran, chap. xxix. v. 44.

" to defend me from that vice, which thou knowest;
" and for forgiveness of those faults, which thou
" knowest. O my Defender! assist me in remember-
" ing thee and being grateful to thee, and in worship-
" ping thee with the excess of my strength. O Lord!
" I have injured my own soul; and no one can
" pardon the faults of thy servants but thou; forgive
" me out of thy loving kindness, and have mercy
" on me; for verily thou art the forgiver of offences
" and the bestower of blessings on thy servants."*

Another traditional prayer, called the prayer of David, runs thus:—" O Lord, grant to me the " love of Thee; grant that I may love those that " love Thee; grant that I may do the deeds that " may win thy love; make thy love to be dearer to " me than myself, my family, than wealth, and even " than cool water."†

" It is one of the glories of Islâm," says an English writer, " that its temples are not made with hands, " and that its ceremonies can be performed anywhere " upon God's earth or under His heaven."‡ Every place in which the Almighty is faithfully worshipped is equally pure. The Moslem, whether he be at home or abroad when the hour of prayer arrives, pours forth his soul in a brief but earnest supplicatory

* Mishkât, Bk. iv. chap. 18, parts 2 and 3.

† Tafsîr-Jellâlî, p. 288.

‡ Hunter, " Our Indian Musalmans," p. 179.

address; his attention is not wearied by the length of his prayers, the theme of which is always self-humiliation, the glorification of the Giver of all good, and reliance on His mercy.* The intensity of the devotional spirit embalmed in the church of Mohammed has hardly been realised by Christendom. Tradition, that faithful chronicler of the past amongst the Moslems, with its hundred corroborative witnesses, records how the Prophet wept during his prayers with the fervour of his emotions; how his noble cousin and son-in-law became so absorbed in his devotions, that his corporeal frame grew benumbed.

Certain ceremonies are prescribed for the due observance of the rites of prayer; but, as it has been said by the Imâm-al-Ghazzâlî,† it is to the devotional state of the mind the Searcher of the spirit looks:‡ "It is not the flesh or the blood of that which ye "sacrifice which is acceptable to God; it is your "piety which is acceptable to the Lord."§ "It is "not righteousness," continues the Koran, "that ye "turn your faces in prayer towards the east or the "west; but righteousness is of him who believeth in "God; . . . who giveth money for God's sake

* Koran, chaps. ii. vv. 129, 239, &c.; vii. vv. 204, 205; xv. verse 132; xvii. verse 79; xx. verse 130; xxx. vv. 16, 17, &c., &c. See the Kitâb-ul-Mustatrif.

† See *post* p. 179.

‡ See the Kitâb-ul-Mustatrif, chap. i.

§ Koran, chap. xxii. verse 38.

"unto his kindred, and unto orphans, and the needy, "and the stranger, and those who ask, and for the "redemption of captives; who is constant at prayers "and giveth alms; and of those who perform their "covenant, when they have covenanted; and who "behave themelves patiently in adversity, and hard-"ships, and in times of violence; these are they who "are true. . . ."* The practice of baptism in the Christian Church, even the lustrations which the Egyptians, the Jews, or the hierophants of the heathen religions in the East and the West required, as preliminary to the performance of devotional or religious exercises, show the peculiar sanctity which was attached to external purifications. Mohammed conserved and consecrated this ancient and beneficent custom. He required frequent ablutions as proper preliminaries to the worship and adoration of the Pure God.† At the same time he especially inculcated that mere external or rather physical purity was not the essence of devotion. He distinctly laid down that the all-pervading Soul of the Universe can only be approached in purity and humility of spirit.‡ The celebrated Imâm-al-Ghazzâlî expressly says, as against those who are only solicitous about external purifications, and have their hearts full of pride and hypocrisy—that the Prophet of God declared that the most important purification is the cleansing of the

* Koran, chap. ii. verse 172. † Koran, chap. iv. verse 56.
‡ Koran, chap. vii. verse 204.

heart from all blameable inclinations and frailties, and the mind from all vicious ideas, and from all thoughts which distract the human attention from God.*

In order to keep alive in the Moslem world the memory of the birthplace of Islâm, Mohammed directed that during prayers the Moslem should turn his face towards Mecca as the glorious centre which saw the first glimmerings of the light of regenerated truth.† But that this rule is not an essential requisite for devotion is evident from the passage of the Koran quoted above.‡

The institution of fasting has existed more or less among all nations. But it may be said, that throughout the ancient world the idea attached to it was, without exception, more of penitence than of abstinence. Even in Judaism, the notion of fasting as an exercise of self-castigation or self-abnegation was of later growth.§ The Essenians, (from their connexion with the Pythagoreans, and through them with the asceticism of the further East), were the first among the Jews to grasp this moral element in the principle of fasting. And Jesus probably derived this idea, like other conceptions, from them.

The example of Jesus consecrated the custom in the Church. But the predominating idea in Chris-

* Compare the Kitâb-ul-Mustatrif, chap. i. sect. 1.

† Koran, chap. ii. vv. 139, 144, &c.

‡ See *ante* p. 177.

§ Compare Dollinger, vol. ii. p. 376.

tianity, with respect to fasts generally, is one of penitence or expiation ;* and partially, of precedent.† Voluntary corporeal mortifications have been as frequent in the Christian Church as in other churches ; but the tendency of such mortifications has invariably been the destruction of mental and bodily energies and the fostering of a morbid asceticism. The institution of fasting in Islâm, on the contrary, has the legitimate object of restraining the passions, by diurnal abstinence, for a limited and definite period, from all the gratifications of the senses, and of directing the overflow of the animal spirits into a healthy channel. Mohammed's religion, as a religion of humanity, strictly excluded all notions of ascetic mortifications of the senses.‡

The wisdom, however, of the Koranic laws is more apparent in the prohibitory rules than even in the positive enactments. The following conditions were required to make fasting obligatory, and show how wonderfully adapted this regulation is for the re-

* Mosheim, vol. i. p. 131. Mosheim distinctly says that fasting came early to be regarded "as the most effectual means of repelling "the force and disconcerting the stratagems of evil spirits, and of "appeasing the anger of an offended Deity." Vol. i. p. 398.

† "The *weekly* and *yearly* festivals of the Christians," says Neander, "originated in the same fundamental idea, . . . the idea of imitating "Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour." And again, "By the "Christians—who were fond of comparing their calling to a warfare, "a militia Christi—such fasts, united with prayers, were named "*stationes*, as if they constituted the watches of the soldiers of Christ "(the milites Christi)." Neander, Church Hist., vol. i. pp. 408, 409.

‡ Koran, chap. ii. verse 183.

straint of the animal propensities of our being, which develop themselves under special circumstances. These conditions are, (1stly) maturity; (2ndly) healthiness of mind; (3rdly) healthiness of body; (4thly) the condition of being at one's home, or what is equivalent to it; and for women, freedom from all ailments.* Mark the wisdom of the rule, as given in the Koran: "O ye that have believed, a "fast is ordained to you, . . . that ye may practise "piety; a fast of a computed number of days. But "he, among you, who shall be ailing or on a journey "(shall fast) an equal number of other days; and "they that are able to keep it (and do not) shall "make atonement by maintaining a poor man. . . . "But if ye fast, it will be better for you, if ye com-"prehend; . . . God willeth that which is easy for "you."†

This rule of abstinence is restricted to the day; in the night, in the intervals of prayer and devotion, the Moslem is allowed, perhaps indeed is bound, to refresh the system by partaking in moderation of food and drink, and otherwise enjoying himself lawfully. In the true spirit of the Teacher, the legists invariably laid down the rule that, during the fasts, abstinence of mind from all base thoughts is as incumbent as the abstinence of the body.‡

* Querry, Droit Musalman, vol. i. p. 197; Jâmaï-Abâsî; Jâmaï-Termizi, chapter on Fasting.

† Koran, chap. ii. verse 181.

‡ The Kitâb-ul-Mustatrif, chap. i. sect. 4.

No religion of the world, prior to Islâm, had consecrated charity, the support of the widow, the orphan, and the helpless poor—by enrolling its principles among the positive enactments of the system.

The Agapæ or feasts of charity, among the early Christians, depended on the will of individuals; their influence, therefore, could only be irregular and spasmodic. It is a matter of history that this very irregularity led to the suppression of the "feasts of charity, or love-feasts," only a short time after their introduction.*

By the laws of Islâm, every individual is bound to contribute a certain part of his substance towards the help and assistance of his poorer neighbours. This portion is usually one part in forty, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the value of all goods, chattels, emblements, on profits of trade, mercantile business, etc. But alms are due only when the property amounts to a certain value,† and has been in the possession of a person for one whole year; nor are any due from

* Neander, vol. i. p. 450, et seq.; Mosheim, vol. ii. p. 56. I do not mean to say that this was the only form in which Christian charity expressed itself. The support of the widow, the poor and orphan was as much insisted upon in Christianity as in Islâm. But even this Divine charity taught by Jesus received an impress of exclusiveness from the disciples, in whose hands he left his work. The widow, in order to claim the benefits of charity, was required to be "threescore "years of age, to have been the wife of one man, to have brought up "children," &c. Compare throughout Blunt's History of the Christian Church, p. 27, et seq.

† For example, no alms are due from a man unless he owns 20 camels.

cattle employed in agriculture or in the carrying of burdens. Besides, at the end of the month of Ramadhân (the month of fasting), and on the day of the *Eed-ul-Fitr*, the festival which celebrates the close of the Moslem Lent, each head of a family has to give away in alms, for himself and for every member of his household, and for each guest who breaks his fast and sleeps in his house during the month, a measure of wheat, barley, dates, raisins, rice, or any other grain, or the value of the same.

The rightful recipients of the alms, as pointed out by the practice of Mohammed and his disciples, are (1) the poor and the indigent; (2) those who help in the collection and distribution of the obligatory alms; (3) slaves, who wish to buy their freedom and have not the means for so doing; (4) debtors, who cannot pay their debts; (4) travellers and strangers.* General charity is inculcated to the Moslem by the Koran in the most forcible terms.† But the glory of Islâm consists in having embodied the beautiful sentiment of Jesus‡ into definite laws.

The wisdom which incorporated into Islâm the time-honoured Arabian custom of annual pilgrimage to Mecca and to the shrine of the Kaaba, has

* Jamaï-Tirmizi, chapter on Almsgiving; Jâmaï-Abâsi. Querry, Droit Musulman. Comp. also the Mabsût.

† Koran, chap. ii. 267, 269, 275, &c.; ix. 60; &c.

‡ Matt. xxv. 35, 36.

breathed into Mohammed's religion a freemasonry and brotherhood of faith, in spite of sectarian divisions. The eyes of the whole Moslem world fixed on that central spot keep alive in the bosom of each some spark of the celestial fire, which lighted up the earth in that century of darkness. Here again, the wisdom of the inspired Lawgiver shines forth in the negative part of the enactments, in the conditions necessary to make the enactments obligatory:—(1) The ripeness of intelligence and discernment; (2) perfect freedom and liberty; (3) possession of the means of transport and subsistence during the journey; (4) possession of means sufficient to support the pilgrim's family during his absence; (5) the possibility and practicability of the voyage.*

Such are the institutions of Mohammed with reference to the practical duties of religion.

"Faith and charity," to use the words of the Christian historian, "are not incompatible with "external rites and positive institutions, which "indeed are necessary in this imperfect state, to "keep alive a sense of religion in the common "mass."† And accordingly Mohammed had attached a few rites to his teachings in order to give a more tangible conception to the generality of mankind. Jesus himself had instituted two rites—

* Jâmai-Abàsî. Querry, Droit Musulman, vol. i. Mabsût.

† Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 124.

Baptism and the 'Holy Supper.'* Probably had he lived longer, he would have added more. But one thing is certain, that had a longer career been vouchsafed to him, he would have placed his teachings on a more systematic basis. This fundamental defect in Christianity has been, in fact, the real cause of the assembling of Councils and Convocations for the establishment of articles and dogmas, which snap asunder at every slight tension of Reason and Freethought. The work of Jesus was left unfinished. It was reserved for another Teacher to systematize the laws of morality. Thus Mohammed's teachings are in no way opposed to those of Jesus; they are simply complementary to them.

Our relations with our Creator are matters of conscience; our relations with our fellow beings must be matters of positive rules; and what higher sanction—to use a legal expression—can be attached for the enforcement of the relative duties of man to man, than the sanction of religion. Religion is not to be regarded merely as a subject for unctuous declamations by "select preachers," or as some strange theory for the peculiar gratification of dreamy minds. Religion ought to mean the rule of life; its chief object ought to be the elevation of Humanity towards that perfection which is the end of our existence. The religion, therefore, which places on a systematic

* Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 124.

basis the fundamental principles of morality, regulating social obligations, and human duties, which brings us nearer and nearer by its compatibility with the highest development of intellect, to the All-Perfect—that religion, we say, has the greatest claim to our consideration and respect. It is the distinctive characteristic of Islâm that it combines within itself the grandest and the most prominent features in all ethnic and catholic* religions, compatible with the Reason and moral Intuition of man. It is not merely a system of positive moral rules, based on a true conception of Human Progress, but it is also "the establishment of certain principles, the "enforcement of certain dispositions, the cultivation "of a certain temper of mind, which the conscience "is to apply to the ever-varying exigencies of time "and place."† The Teacher of Islâm, preached in a thousand varied ways, universal love and brotherhood, as the emblem of the love borne towards the Primal Cause of All. "How do you think God will "know you when you are in His Presence—by your "love of your children, of your kin, of your neigh-"bours, of your fellow creatures?"‡ "Do you love "your Creator, love your fellow-beings first."§ "Do

* For the use of these words, see Clarke, Ten Great Religions, chap. i.

† These are the words of Milman (History of Christianity, vol. i. p. 206) applied to his own religion.

‡ Mishkât, bks. xxii.-iii. chaps. 15 and 16.

§ Comp. Kastalâni's Commentary on the Sahîh of Bukhâri, pt. i. p. 70.

" you wish to approach the Lord, love his creatures, " love for them what you love yourself, reject for " them what you reject for yourself, do unto them " what you wish to be done unto you."

The wonderful adaptability of the Islâmic precepts for all ages and nations; their entire concordance with the light of Reason; the absence of all mysterious doctrines to cast a shade of sentimental ignorance round the primal truths implanted in the human breast,—all prove that Islâm represents the latest development of the religious faculties of our being. Those who have ignored the historic significance of some of its precepts, have deemed that their seeming harshness or unadaptability to present modes of thought, ought to exclude it from every claim to universality. But a little inquiry into the historic value of laws and precepts, a little more fairness in the examination of facts, would evince the temporary character of such rules as may appear scarcely consonant with the requirements or prejudices of modern times.* The catholicity of Islâm, its expansiveness, and its charity towards all moral creeds has been utterly mistaken, perverted, or wilfully concealed by the bigotry of rival religions.

" Verily," says the Koran, " those who believe " (the Moslems), and those who are Jews, Christians " or Sabeans, whoever hath faith in God and the last

* See note I. to this chapter.

"day (future existence); and worketh that which "is right and good, for them shall be the reward "with their Lord; there will come no fear on them; "neither shall they be grieved."*

The same sentiment is repeated in similar words in the fifth Sura (chapter of the Korân); and a hundred other passages, prove that Islâm does not confine "salvation" to the followers of Mohammed alone:—"To every one have We given a Law and "a Way . . . . And if God had pleased, He would "have made you all (all mankind) one people (people "of one religion). But He hath done otherwise, "that He might try you in that which He hath "severally given unto you, wherefore press forward "in good works. Unto God shall ye return, and "He will tell you that concerning which ye dis-"agree."†

"There are certain ages," says the historian of European Rationalism, "in which the sense of "virtue has been the mainspring of religion; there "are other ages, in which this position is occupied "by the sense of sin."‡ In the one case, a consciousness of human dignity furnishes the motive power to our actions; in the other, a sense of the utter sinfulness of man. The philosophies

* Koran, chap. ii. 59.

† Koran, chap. v. 56; comp. also, xxix. 45; xxxii. 23, 24; xxxix. 47; xl. 13, &c. See note II.

‡ Lecky. Hist. of Rationalism in Europe, vol. i. p. 388.

of ancient Greece and Rome embalmed the first principle; Christianity the latter.

Of all systems of religion, Islâm alone combines both of these two conceptions. The belief that man will be judged by his works solely, throws the Moslem on the practice of self-denial and universal charity; the belief in Divine Providence, in the mercy, love, and omnipotence of God leads him to self-humiliation before the Sovereign of the universe, and to the practice of those heroic virtues which have given rise to the charge that "the virtues of Islâm are stoical,"* patience, resignation, and firmness in the trials of life. It leads him (to use once more Lecky's phraseology), to interrogate his conscience with nervous anxiety, to study with scrupulous care the motives that actuate him,† to distrust his own strength, and to rely upon the assistance of an almighty and all-loving Power, in the conflict between Good and Evil.

Thus Islâm combines all the highest principles which have actuated humanity from the time it saw light on earth.

In some religions, the precepts which inculcated duties have been so utterly devoid of practicability, so completely wanting in a knowledge of human nature and partaking so much of the dreamy vague-

* Clarke, "Ten Great Religions," p. 484.

† Comp. the first apologue in the "*Akhlâk*" (Ethics) of Hussain Wâiz, on *Ikhlâs*.

ness of enthusiasts, as to become in the real battles of life simply useless.* The practical character of a religion, its abiding influence in the common relations of mankind—in the affairs of every-day life, its power on the masses—are the true criteria for judging of its universality. We do not look to exceptional minds to recognize the nature of a religion. We search among the masses to understand its true character. Does it exercise deep power over them? does it elevate them? does it regulate their conception of rights and duties? does it, if carried to the South Sea Islander, or preached to the Caffrarians, improve or degrade them?—are the questions we naturally ask ourselves. In Islâm is joined a lofty Idealism with the most rationalistic practicality. It did not ignore human nature; it never entangled itself in the tortuous pathways which lie outside the domains of the actual and the real. Its object, like that of other systems, was the elevation of humanity towards the absolute Ideal of Perfection; but it attained, or tries to attain, this object by grasping the truth that the nature of man is, in this existence, imperfect. If it did not say, "If thy "brother smite thee on one cheek, turn thou the "other also to him;" if it allowed the punishment of the wanton wrongdoer to the extent of the injury he had done†—it also taught in fervid words and

* Comp. M. Ernest Havet's remarks in his valuable and learned work, Le Christianisme et ses Origines, Pref. p. xxxix.

† Koran, chap. xxii. 40, 41. Thonissen's remark that Moham-

ten thousand varied strains, the practice of forgiveness and benevolence, and the return of good for evil:—"Who speaketh better," says the Koran, "than he who inviteth unto God, and worketh good. ". . . . Good and evil shall not be held equal. "Turn away evil with that which is better."* . . . And again, speaking of paradise, it says:—"It is "prepared for the godly; who give alms in pros- "perity and adversity; who bridle their anger and "forgive men; for God loveth the beneficent."†

The practice of these noble precepts does not lie enshrined in the limbo of false sentimentalism. With the Moslem, they form the active principles of life. History has preserved, for the admiration of wondering posterity, many examples of patience under suffering exhibited by the followers of other creeds. But the practice of the virtues of patient forgiveness is easier in adversity, when we have no power to punish the evildoer, than in prosperity. It is related of Hussain, that noble martyr of Kerbela, that a slave, having once thrown the contents of a scalding dish over him as he sat at dinner, fell on his knees and repeated the verse of the Koran:—"Paradise is "for those who bridle their anger:"—"I am not "angry," answered Hussain; the slave proceeded,

med allowed the punishment of the wilful wrongdoer for the purpose of preventing enormous evils, must always be borne in mind.—L'Hist. du Droit Criminel des Peuples Anciens, vol. ii. p. 67.

* Koran, chap. xli. 33, 34.

† Koran, chap. v. 127, 128.

" and for those who forgive men :" " I forgive you." The slave, however, finished the verse, adding, " for " God loveth the beneficent :" " I give you your " liberty and four hundred pieces of silver," replied Hussain.*

The author of the Kasshâf thus sums up the essence of the Islâmic teachings :—" Seek again him " who drives you away ; give to him who takes away " from you ; pardon him who injures you ;† for God " loveth that you should cast into the depth of your " souls, the roots of His Perfections."‡

We shall conclude this chapter with the following passage from the Koran :—

" The servants of the Merciful are they that walk " upon the earth softly ; and when the ignorant " speak unto them, they reply, Peace ! They that " spend the night worshipping their Lord, prostrate " and standing :—

" And that say,—Oh, our Lord ! turn away from " us the torment of Hell ; verily, from the torment " thereof, there is no release. Surely it is an evil " abode and resting-place ! Those that when they

* This anecdote has been told by Sale in a note to the 3rd chapter of his translation of the Koran, and also by Gibbon. But both have by mistake applied the episode to Hassan, the brother of Hussain. See Tafsîr-Hussainî, Mîrat Ed. p. 109. See note III. to this chapter.

† Comp. this with the precept of Mohammed reported by Abû Dardâ, Mishkât, book iv. chap. i. pt. 2, and the whole chapter on Forgiveness (chapter 36) in the Mustatrif.

‡ Zamakhshrî (the Kasshâf) Egyp. Ed. pt. i. p. 280.

" spend are neither profuse nor niggardly, but take
" a middle course:—Those that invoke not with God
" any other God; and slay not a soul that God hath
" forbidden, otherwise than by right; and commit not
" fornication; (for he who doeth that is involved in
" sin,—His torment shall be doubled in the day of
" judgment: therein ignominiously shall he remain for
" ever,—excepting him that shall repent and believe
" and perform righteous works; as for them, God
" shall change their evil things into good; and God
" is forgiving and merciful. And whoever re-
" penteth and doeth good works, verily, he turneth
" unto God with a true repentance.) They who
" bear not witness to that which is false; and
" when they pass by vain sport, they pass it by
" with dignity:—they who, when admonished by the
" revelations of the Lord, thereupon fall not down
" as if deaf and blind; who say, 'Oh, our Lord,
" grant us of our wives and children such as shall
" be a comfort unto us, and make us examples unto
" the pious!'—These shall be rewarded with lofty
" mansions [in paradise], for that they persevered;
" and they shall be accosted therein with welcome
" and salutation:—For ever therein;—a fair Abode
" and Resting-place!"*

* Koran, chap. xxv. ver. 64—76.

NOTE I. TO CHAPTER XII.

It must be remembered that many of the sumptuary regulations, precepts, and prohibitions of Mohammed were called forth by the temporary circumstances of the times and people. With the disappearance of such circumstances, the need for those laws have also disappeared. The people therefore, whether Moslem or not, who suppose that every Islâmic precept is necessarily immutable, do injustice to history and the development of the intellect of man. For the consideration of such men I would recommend the following words of one of our greatest authors :—"It is only by an attentive "examination and well-sustained application that we can discover "the truth, and guard ourselves against errors and mistakes. In fact, "if we were merely to satisfy ourselves by reproducing the records "transmitted by tradition without consulting the rules furnished by "experience, the fundamental principles of the art of government, "the nature even of the particular civilisation or the circumstances "which characterize the human society; if we are not to judge of "the wants which occurred in distant times by those which are "occurring under our eyes, if we are not to compare the past with "the present, we can hardly escape from falling into errors and "losing the way of truth."*

The sumptuary prohibitions of Mohammed may be divided into two classes, *qualitative* and *quantitative*, as metaphysicians would say. The prohibition of excess in eating and drinking and others of the like import belong to the latter class. They were called forth in part by the peculiar semi-barbarous epicureanism which was coming into fashion among the Arabs from their intercourse with the demoralised Syrians and Persians, and in part by circumstances of which only glimpses are afforded us in the Koran. The absolute prohibition of swine's flesh, which may be classed under the head of qualitative prohibitions, arose, as is evident, from hygienic reasons: and this prohibition must remain unchanged, as long as the nature of the animal and the diseases engendered by the eating of its flesh remain as at present. The prohibition against dancing is also qualitative in its character, as it was directed against the orgiastic dances with which the heathen Arabs used to celebrate the Syro-Phœnician worship of their Ashtaroth, their Moloch, and their Baal.

* Prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldoun, traduits par M. de Slane, première partie, p. 13.

NOTE II. TO CHAPTER XII.

The passages of the Koran I have cited to prove the universal charity of Islâm are not at all inconsistent with the following sentence in chap. iii. :—"Whoever practiseth any other religion than Islâm, it "shall not be accepted of him." It must be always borne in mind that Mohammed announced himself like Jesus only as a Reformer, that he had comé to complete and not to destroy. The principles he inculcated were in strict conformity with the principles inculcated by the great moral heroes of antiquity. Mohammed always announced his religion as the religion of Abraham, of Moses, and of Jesus. Islâm thus in his mind, as in ours, included all the moral duties enforced by reason and conscience. The passage in chap. iii. therefore refers to those who "practise" that which is not consonant with Truth and the eternal goodness of our nature.

Besides, chap. v. which contains the broadest enunciation of the principle of universal charity is the latest of all the *suras*, and is admitted to be so by the Christian historians themselves, (comp. Rodwell, and Nöldcke, Geschichte des Quorans). Supposing even that the passage in chap. iii. conveys an exclusive idea, we must admit that the later enunciation portrays a progressive development of the mind of the inspired Teacher. As we shall show hereafter the minds of all the great Teachers have gradually awakened to the sense of universal Humanity. Neither Mohammed nor Jesus was an exception to this rule.

NOTE III. TO CHAPTER XII.

Hussain was the son of Alî, and grandson of the Prophet. Intrigue and treachery had thrown the office of the Caliphate into the hands of Yezîd, the grandson of Abû Sufiân and Hind (see ante, p. 95.) This wretched specimen of humanity reminded the world of a Nero, a Domitian, or a Caligula. His whole soul was bent on re-introducing into the Islâmic world all the disgraceful superstitions, habits, and modes of life from which Mohammed had only so lately weaned his people. At the earnest solicitations of the inhabitants of Kufa, Hussain endeavoured to help them, but was murdered, together with every male member of his family, excepting one, on the plains of Kerbela, in Mœsopotamia. The annals of the world present only

one spectacle, which, in deep interest, can compare with the awfu scenes enacted on the plains of Kerbela, nor does history record a person purer, more elevated, or more magnanimous than Ali and his noble son.* If a sacrifice *is* ever needed "to bring man close to "the Deity,"† then the self-sacrifice of Hussain has consummated the spiritualisation of the religion of Mohammed.

* Comp. Oelsner, Des Effets de la Religion de Mohammed, p. 111.
† Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. ii. p. 366.

CHAPTER XIII.

The grand destiny which the religion of Mohammed has fulfilled, and has yet to fulfil in the world, calls for an inquiry into the causes of its progress and success in the melioration of society.

It has been frequently said by the enemies of the Prophet that his religion was spread by the sword, was upheld by the sword, if not produced by the sword.* A careful examination of the circumstances and facts connected with the rise of Islâm, will, we trust, completely refute all these calumnies.

From the moment Mohammed appeared in Medîna his destiny became intertwined with that of his people, and of those who had invited and welcomed him into their midst. His destruction would have led to the annihilation of the entire body of the Medinites and of the "Refugees." The Koreish were bent on vengeance, and on the punishment of those whom they regarded as apostates from the faith of their fathers. The exile of Mohammed and his followers was not enough for the Idolaters. The

* Comp. Muir and Weil on this point. The latter uses the hardest expressions of the two, and claims withal to be called a historian.

entire destruction of Islâm was their chief object, and in simple defence, therefore, was it commanded to the Moslems:—"Defend yourself against your "enemies in the war of enterprise for the Reli- "gion; but attack them not first; God hateth the "aggressor."*

It is usual, with the Christian biographers of the Prophet, to asperse his character because he defended himself and his followers against the attacks of his enemies.

We have no right to assume that because some of the great Teachers, who have from time to time appeared on earth, have succumbed under the force of opposing circumstances, and become martyrs; that because others have created in their brains an unrealized Utopia—that because dreamers have existed and enthusiasts have suffered—Mohammed was bound to follow their example, and leave the world before he had fulfilled his mission. Nor was he obliged to sacrifice himself and the entire community over which he was called to preside, for the sake of carrying out what, in the present time, would be called an Idea.

From the moment of his departure for Medîna, the Idolaters determined upon his destruction and that of his followers. Self-defence became a question of self-preservation. Either the Moslems must submit to be massacred, or fight when they were

* Koran, chap. ii. ver. 186.

attacked. They chose the latter alternative, and succeeded after a long struggle in subduing their enemies.

The bitter animosity of the Jews, their treacherous and faithless conduct—their repeated violation of the most solemn engagements—led the Moslems, for the safety of their weak and small community, to visit those offenders with just severity.

Let us compare these struggles in self-defence and for self-preservation with the frightful wars of the Jews and the Christians, and even of the 'gentle' Parsis, for the propagation of their respective faiths. In the case of the former, aggression and extirpation were sanctified by religion. They were cursed for sparing.

In the case of the early Christians, the doctrine of humility and meekness, preached by the Prophet of Nazareth, was soon forgotten in the pride of power. From the moment Christianity became a recognized force — the dominant faith of a community — it became aggressive and persecuting. Parallels have been drawn between Jesus and Mohammed by different writers. Those, fully penetrated with the conviction of the Godhead of Jesus, have recognized in the "earthly" means employed by the Arabian Prophet for the regeneration of his people, the results of Satanic suggestions; while the non-employment of such means, perhaps from want of opportunity to use them, has been looked upon as

establishing the divinity of the noble Prophet of Nazareth. We shall furnish reasons here to show that such comparisons are unfair, based as they are on what is not only false to history, but false to human nature.

The circumstances attending the lives of Jesus and Mohammed were utterly different. During his whole lifetime the influence of Jesus remained confined to a small body of followers, taken chiefly from the lower and uneducated ranks. He fell a victim* to the passions he had evoked by his scathing denunciations of the lifeless sacerdotalism of the priestly classes—to the undying hatred of a relentless race—before his followers had become either numerous or influential enough to require practical rules for their guidance, or before they could form an organisation, either for purposes of spiritual teaching, or as a safeguard against the persecutions of the dominant creed. Drawn from a powerful community, with settled laws, the observance of which was guaranteed by the suzerain power, the followers of Jesus had no opportunity of forming an organisation, nor had the Great Teacher any need to

* I write according to the generally received opinion among Western scholars, That Mohammed, in accordance with the traditions current in his time, believed that Jesus miraculously disappeared, there is no doubt. In spite of this so-called apocryphal Gnostic tradition being opposed to the general body of Christian traditions, there is as much historic probability on one side as the other. See *ante*, p. 23-24.

frame rules of practical positive morality. The want was felt when the community became more extensive, and the genius of a scholar, well-versed in the Neo-platonic lore, destroyed the individuality and simplicity of the teachings of the Master.

Mohammed, like Jesus, was followed from the commencement of his career as preacher and reformer, by the hostility and opposition of his people. His followers also, in the beginning, were few and insignificant. He also was preceded by men who had shaken off the bondage of idolatry, and listened to the springs of life within. He, too, preached gentleness, charity and love.

But Mohammed appeared among a nation steeped in barbarous usages, who looked upon war as the object of life—a nation far removed from the materialising degrading influences of the Greeks and the Romans, yet likewise far from their humanising influences. At first, his denunciations evoked scorn, and then vengeful passions. His followers, however, increased in number and strength until, at last, the invitation of the Medinites crowned his glorious work with success. From the moment he accepted the asylum so nobly proffered, from the moment he was called upon to become their chief magistrate as well as their spiritual teacher, his fate became involved in theirs: from that time, the hostilities of the Idolaters and their allies required an unsleeping vigilance on the part of the Moslems. A single city had to make

head against the combined attacks of the multitudinous tribes of Arabia. Under these circumstances, energetic measures were often necessary to sustain the existence of the Moslem community. When persuasion failed, pressure was required.

The same instinct of self-preservation which spoke so warmly within the bosom of the great Prophet of Nazareth,* when he advised his disciples to look to the instruments of defence, caused the persecuted Moslems to take up arms when attacked by their relentless enemies.

Gradually, by gentle kindness and energy, all the disjointed fragments of the Arabian tribes were brought together, to the worship of the true God; and then peace settled upon the land. Born among a people, the most fiery of the earth, then as now vehement and impulsive by nature, and possessed of passions as burning as the sun of their desert, Mohammed impressed on them habits of self-control and self-denial, such as have never before been revealed in the pages of history.

At the time of Mohammed's advent, international obligations were unknown. When nations or tribes made war upon each other, the result usually was the massacre of the able-bodied, the slavery of the innocent, and plunder of the household penates.†

The Romans, who took thirteen centuries to evolve

* Luke xxii. 36.

† This is a historical fact, too well known to require corroboration.

a system of laws, which was as comprehensive as it was elevated in conception,* could never realise the duties of international morality, or of humanity. They waged war for the sole purpose of subjugating the surrounding nations. Where they succeeded, they imposed their will on the people absolutely. Treaties were made and broken, just as convenience dictated. The liberty of other nations was never thought of as of the slightest importance in their estimation.† The introduction of Christianity made little or no change in the views entertained by its professors concerning international obligations. War was as inhuman, and as exterminating as before; people were led into slavery without compunction on the part of the captors; treaties were made and broken just as suited the purpose of some designing chieftain. Christianity did not profess to deal with international morality, and so left its followers groping in the dark.

Modern thinkers, instead of admitting this to be a real deficiency in the Christian system,—natural to the unfinished state in which it was left,—have tried to justify it. A strange perversion of the human intellect! Hence, what is right in the individual comes to be considered wrong in the nation,

* In justice to the Semitic races, I must say that almost all the great jurists of Rome were Semites,—Phœnicians, Tyrians or Carthaginians.

† Compare Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, throughout on this subject.

and *vice versâ*. Religion and morality, two convertible terms, are kept apart from the domain of law. Religion, which claims to regulate the tie of individual men, ignores the reciprocal relations of the various aggregates of humanity. Religion is thus reduced into mere sentimentalism, an object of gushing effusion, or mutual laudation at discussion societies, albeit sometimes rising to the dignity of philosophical morality.

The basis of international obligations, as has been ably observed, consists in the recognition of nations as individuals, and of the fact that there is not one standard for individuals and another for nations; for as individuals compose a nation, so nations compose humanity; and the rights of nations, and their obligations to each other in nowise differ from those existing between individuals.*

True it is that the rise of the Latin Church in the West, and the necessary augmentation of the power of the bishops of Rome, introduced in the Latin Christian world a certain degree of international responsibility. But this was absolutely confined to the adherents of the Church of Rome, or was occasionally extended as a favour to Greek Christianity. The rest of the world was unconditionally excluded from the benefits of such responsibility. "The name of Religion served as the plea

* David Urquhart's Essay on the Effects of the Contempt of International Law, reprinted from "The East and West," Feb. 1867.

"and justification of aggression upon weaker na-
"tions; it led to their spoliation and enslavement."
Every act of violation was sanctified by the Church, and in case of extreme iniquity, absolution paved the criminal's way to heaven. From the first slaughters of Charlemagne, with the full sanction of the Church, to the massacre and enslavement of the unoffending races of America, there is an unbroken series of the infringement of international duties,* and the claims of humanity. This utter disregard of the first principles of charity led also to the persecution of those followers of Jesus who ventured to think differently from the Church.†

The rise of Protestantism made no difference. The wars and mutual persecutions of the several religious factions, form a history in themselves. "Persecution," says Hallam, "is the deadly original "sin of the Reformed Churches, that which cools "every honest man's zeal for their cause, in propor-"tion as his reading becomes more expansive."‡

* Comp. Lecky's exhaustive chapter on persecution by the Church. Hist. of Rationalism in Europe.

† Comp. Milman, Latin Christianity, vol. i. p. 352; and Lecky—chap. on Persecution.

‡ Hallam's Const. Hist. of England, vol. i. chap. ii. p. 62. When Calvin burnt Servetus for his opinions regarding the Trinity, his act was applauded, says Lecky, by all sections of Protestants. Melancthon, Bullinger, and Farel wrote to express their warm approbation of the crime. Beza defended it in an elaborate treatise. Lecky, Hist. of Rationalism, vol. ii. p. 49. A study of the penal laws of England as against the Catholics, Dissenters, and Non-conformists, is enough to shock any candid mind.

But, however much the various new-born Churches disagreed among themselves, or from the Church of Rome, regarding doctrinal and theological points, they were in perfect accord with each other, in denying all community of interests, rights, and duties to nations outside the pale of Christendom.*

The spirit of Islâm, on the contrary, is entirely opposed to isolation and exclusiveness. In a comparatively rude age, when the world was half-immersed in darkness, moral and social, Mohammed preached those principles of equality which are only half-realised in other creeds; and promulgated laws, which for their expansiveness and nobility of conception, surpass everything on record. "Islâm," says the able writer to whom we have referred above, "offered its religion but never enforced it; and the "acceptance of that religion conferred co-equal "rights with the conquering body, and emancipated "the vanquished states from the conditions which "every conqueror, since the world existed, up to the "period of Mohammed, had invariably imposed."

By the laws of Islâm, liberty of conscience and freedom of worship were allowed and guaranteed to the followers of every other creed under Moslem dominion. The passage in the Koran, "Let there "be no forcing in Religion,"† is the grandest testi-

* Grotius, the founder perhaps of international law in Europe, formally excepted the Mohammedans from all community of rights with the European nations.

† Chap. ii. v. 257 (a Medîna sura).

mony to the principle of toleration and charity. It was uttered not by a powerless enthusiast, or a philosophical dreamer; it was uttered by a man at the head of a commonwealth sufficiently strong and well organised to enforce its principles whatever they might have been. In religion, as in politics, individuals and sects have preached toleration, and insisted upon its practice only as long as they have been powerless and feeble.* Mohammed did not merely preach toleration; he embodied it into a law.

This principle of the love of humanity was practised towards every nation subject to Moslem power. A nominal tribute was the only compensation they were required to pay for the observance and enjoyment of their faith. Once the tax or tribute agreed upon, every interference with their religion or the liberty of their conscience was regarded as a direct contravention of the laws of Islâm. Could so much be said of other creeds? Mark the message of the Prophet himself to the Christians of Najrân:—

"The Prophet of the Lord wrote to the Bishop "of the Banî Hârith, and the Bishops of Najrân, and "their priests, and all that followed them, and their "monks,—saying, that they should continue in (the "possession and practice of) everything small and "great, as it then stood, in their churches, their

* Comp. Hallam, Constit. Hist of England, vol. i. chap. iii. p. 98, note.

"prayers, and their monasteries. The pledge of "God and of His Prophet was given that no Bishop "should be removed from his bishoprick, nor any "monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his "priesthood; that their authority and rights should "not be altered, nor anything whatever which was "customary amongst them; so long as they con- "ducted themselves peaceably and uprightly, they "shall not be burdened with oppression, neither "shall they oppress."*

We must now go back to our examination of the wars of the Prophet. We have seen that the various conflicts of the Moslems under Mohammed with the surrounding tribes were occasioned by the aggressive and unrelenting hostility of the Idolaters, and were necessary for self-defence.

The battle of Mûta and the campaign of Tabûk, the earliest demonstrations against a foreign state, arose out of the assassination of an envoy by the Greeks. The principle which justified the invasion of a country by a Christian Power, because an ignorant chief had detained some insolent agents,† would surely justify the Moslems punishing the faithless Greeks for an iniquitous deed, abhorred by all lovers of justice. Probably we should not have

* Muir, vol. ii. p. 299, (after the Kâtib-ul-Wâckidi). As Muir acknowledges this document to be genuine, I am entitled to use it as such, notwithstanding the slight credit I attach to Wâkidi or the Kâtib in general.

† I allude to the Abyssinian War.

heard of the promulgation of Islâm by the sword, had the Moslems not punished the Eastern Christians for this murder.

The battle of Mûta was indecisive; and the campaign of Tabûk, which was entirely defensive in its nature, (being undertaken to repulse the gathering of the forces of Heraclius) left this international crime unpunished during the lifetime of the Prophet; but his successors did not forget it, and a heavy penalty was exacted.

The vast extent of the Greek Empire brought the Moslems into a state of belligerency or warfare with the greatest portion of Christendom. Besides, the anomalous position occupied by the governors of the provinces under the waning suzerainty of the Byzantine emperors rendered it impossible for the Moslem chiefs to put an end to this condition of affairs by means of treaty-stipulations with any one of them. Before one could be subdued and brought to terms, another committed some act of hostility, and compelled the Moslems to punish him. Hence "the career once entered upon, they were placed in "just warfare with the whole of the then world."*

* Urquhart, Essay "Islâm as a Political System." I do not mean to assert that the Moslems were never actuated by the spirit of aggression or by cupidity. It would be showing extreme ignorance of human nature to make such an assertion. It was hardly possible that after the unprecedented progress they had made against their enemies and assailants, and after becoming aware of the weakness of the surrounding nations, they should still retain their moderation, and keep within the bounds of the law.

Religion has often furnished to designing chieftains, in the Moslem world as in Christendom, the pretext for the gratification of their ambition. But we confine ourselves to the spirit of the precepts which Mohammed bequeathed as the noblest legacy to his followers. The spirit of aggression never breathed itself into that code which formally incorporated the law of nations with the religion; and the followers of Mohammed in the plenitude of their power were always ready to say, 'Cease all hostility to us, and be our allies, and we shall be faithful to you; or pay tribute, and we will secure and protect you in all your rights; or adopt our religion, and you shall enjoy every privilege we ourselves possess.'

The principal directions of Mohammed, on which the Moslem laws of war are founded, show the wisdom and humanity which animated the Islâmic system: "And fight for the Religion of God against those "who fight against you; but transgress not (by at- "tacking them first) for God loveth not the trans- "gressors; . . . if they attack you, slay them; . . . "but if they desist, let there be no hostility except "against the ungodly."*

In turning their arms against Persia, the Moslems were led on by circumstances. The Mundhirs, a dynasty of semi-Arab kings, who reigned under the

* Koran, chap. ii. verse 186; compare verse 257.

shadow of the Persian monarchy, though politically hostile, were allied to the Byzantines by ties of faith and community of interests. The first conflicts of the Moslems with the Greeks naturally reacted on the Hirites, the subjects of the Mundhirs. The Hirite territories comprehended a large tract of country, from the banks of the Euphrates westward, overlapping the desert of Irâk, and almost reaching the pasturage of the Ghassân Arabs who owned allegiance to the Byzantines.

The position of Hîra under the Persians was similar to that of Judæa under Augustus or Tiberius. About the time of the Moslem conquest, a Persian nominee ruled this principality; but the jealousy of the Chosroes associated a Merzbân or satrap with this successor of the Mundhirs, whose subjects, as impatient of control then as their descendants now, engaged in predatory raids on the neighbouring tribes, and became involved in hostilities with the Moslems. A strong government under the guidance of a single chief, whose power had become doubly consolidated after the suppression of the revolts of the nomades on the death of the Prophet, was little inclined to brook quietly the insults of the petty dependency of a tottering empire. A Moslem army marched upon Hîra; the Merzbân fled to Madâin (Ctesiphon, the capital of the Persian Empire), and the Arab chief submitted, almost without a struggle, to the Moslems under Khâlid ibn Walîd.

The conquest of Hîra brought the Moslems to the threshold of the dominion of Chosroes. Persia had, after a long period of internecine conflict, signalised by revolting murders and atrocities, succeeded in obtaining an energetic ruler, in the person of Yezdjerd. Under the directions of this sovereign, the Persian chiefs brought an imposing force to bear on the Moslems. Omar now ruled at Medîna. More ambitious and more vigorous than his predecessor, he had yet the moderation to offer to Yezdjerd, through his deputies, the usual terms by which war might be avoided. These terms were, profession of Islâm, which meant the reform of those political abuses that had brought the Kyânian empire so low; the reduction of all those heavy taxes, perquisites, &c.,* which sucked out the life-blood of the nation; and the administration of justice by the code of Mohammed, which held all men, without distinction of rank or office, equal in the eye of the law. The alternative offer was the payment of tribute in return for protection. These terms were disdainfully refused by Yezdjerd; and the days of Kâdessia and Nehâvend followed. The Kesra's power was irretrievably shattered; his nobles and the chiefs of the priesthood whose interest it was to keep up the reign of disorder and oppression, were cut off, and he

* Save the tenths on landed property, and 2½ per cent. of every man's means for the poor, the distribution of which would have been left to himself and his officers.

himself became a fugitive like another Darius. The nation at large hailed the Moslems as their deliverers.*

The general conversion of the Persians to the religion of Mohammed, and the almost total extinction of the Magian worship are often taken as proofs of the intolerant character of Islâm. But, in the blindness of bigotry, even scholars forget the circumstances under which the Moslems entered the country. Every trace of religious life was all but extinct in the people; the masses were ground down by the worst of all evils, a degenerate priesthood and a licentious oligarchy. The Mazdakian and Manichean outbreaks had loosened every rivet in the social fabric. Kesrâ Anûshirvân had only postponed for a time the general disruption of society. The consequence was, that as soon as the Moslems entered the country as the precursors of law and order, a general conversion took place; and Persia became for ever attached to Islâm.†

An impartial analyst of facts will now be able to judge for himself how much truth there is in the

* Yezdjerd, like Darius, was assassinated by his own people. Compare Ibn-al-Athîr throughout, and Caussin de Perceval.

† As a testimony to the spirit which animated the Moslems, we shall quote the following from Gibbon: "The administration of "Persia was regulated by an actual survey of the people, the cattle, "and the fruits of the earth; and this monument which attests the "vigilance of the Caliphs might have instructed the philosophers of "every age." (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. v. p. 97.) See also Suyûtî, Târikh-ul-Khulafâ, (History of the Caliphs.)

following remark of Muir: "It was essential to the "permanence of Islâm that its aggressive course "should be continuously pursued, and that its claim "to an universal acceptance, or, at the least, to an "universal supremacy should be enforced at the "point of the sword."* Every religion, in some stage of its career, has, from the tendencies of its professors, been aggressive. Even Magianism and Brahminism have been persecuting and aggressive. Such also has been the fate of Islâm; but that it ever aims at proselytism by force, or that it has been more aggressive than other religions must be entirely denied.†

Syed Ahmed Khan in his learned work seems to admit that Mohammedanism "grasped the sword to "proclaim the eternal truth—the unity of the God-"head." We deny altogether that Islâm ever grasped the sword for the purpose of proselytising. Islâm seized the sword only in self-defence, and held it in self-defence. Islâm never interfered with the dogmas of any moral faith, never persecuted, never established an Inquisition. "To Christians," says Urquhart, "a difference of religion was indeed a "ground for war, and that, not merely in dark times "and amongst fanatics." From the massacres in the name of religion, of the Saxons, the Frisians and other Germanic tribes by Charlemagne; from the

* Muir, Life of Mahomet, vol. iv. p. 251.

† Compare Niebuhr's remarks in his Description de l'Arabie, p. 21.

murder of the millions in Mexico and Peru; from the burning to death of the thousands of innocent men and women; from the frightful slaughter of the Albigenses,* and from the sanguinary scenes of the Thirty Years' Wars, down to the cruel persecutions of Calvinistic Scotland and Lutheran England, there is an uninterrupted chain of intolerance, bigotry and fanaticism.

It has been said that a warlike spirit was infused into Mediæval Christianity by aggressive Islâm! The massacres of Justinian, and the fearful wars of Christian Clovis, in the name of religion, occurred long before the time of Mohammed.

Compare again the conduct of the Christian Crusaders with that of the Moslems. "When the Khalif "Omar took Jerusalem, A. D. 637, he rode into the "city by the side of the Patriarch Sophronius, con- "versing with him on its antiquities. At the hour "of prayer, he declined to perform his devotions in "the Church of the Resurrection, in which he "chanced to be, but prayed on the steps of the "Church of Constantine; 'for,' said he to the "Patriarch, 'had I done so, the Mussulmans in a "future age might have infringed the treaty, under "colour of imitating my example.' But, in the cap- "ture by the Crusaders, the brains of young children "were dashed out against the walls; infants were

* Compare Draper, Intellectual Development of Europe, vol. ii. p. 59.

"pitched over the battlements; men were roasted "at fires; some were ripped up, to see if they had "swallowed gold; the Jews were driven into their "synagogue, and there burnt; a massacre of nearly "70,000 persons took place; and the Pope's legate "was seen partaking in the triumph!"*

Islâm "grasped the sword" in self-defence; Christianity grasped it, in order to stifle freedom of thought and liberty of belief. With the conversion of Constantine, Christianity had become the dominant religion of the western world. It had thenceforth nothing to fear from its enemies; but from the moment it obtained the mastery, it developed its true character of isolation and exclusiveness. Wherever Christianity prevailed, no other religion could be followed without molestation.

The Moslems, on the other hand, required from others a simple guarantee of peace and amity, tribute in return for protection, or perfect equality—the possession of equal rights and privileges, on condition of the acceptance of Islâm.

* Draper, History of the Intellectual Development of Europe, vol. ii. p. 22.

CHAPTER XIV.

In the infancy of mankind, in the early stages of society, when the cohesive power, which serves in advanced periods to keep the different parts of the social fabric together, is yet undeveloped,—polygamy is a principle of self-preservation. Man is the dominant element in these stages of the progress of humanity; woman is a mere subordinate. Her existence depended on her attaching herself to man, and her numerical superiority originated the custom which in our advanced times is truly regarded as an unendurable evil.

Among all Eastern nations of antiquity, polygamy was a recognised institution. Its practice by royalty, which everywhere bore the insignia of divinity, sanctified its observance to the people. In India from the earliest times polygamy was recognised and practised in both its aspects, plurality of husbands as well as plurality of wives.*

Among the Persians, Medes, Babylonians and Assyrians, polygamy was customary to all classes of society, accompanied by a seclusion of women as

* Comp. Talboys Wheeler, Hist. of India, vol. i. p. 130.

severe as among the Athenians.* To the Persians, religion offered a premium on the plurality of wives.†

Among the Syro-Phœnician races, whom the Israelites displaced, conquered or destroyed, polygamy was degraded into bestiality.‡

Among the Thracians, Lydians and the Pelasgian races settled in various parts of Europe and Western Asia, the custom of plurality of marriages prevailed to an inordinate extent, and dwarfs all comparison with the practice prevailing elsewhere.§

Among the Jews, the practice was not only approved of, but blessed by Jehovah.

Polygamy was permitted among the ancient Greeks, as in the case of the detachment of young men from the army, mentioned by Plutarch. Among the Athenians, the wife was a mere chattel, marketable and transferable to others, and a subject of testamentary disposition. She was an evil indispensable for the ordering of the household and procreation of children. The Athenian might have any number of wives, only differing from each other in rank and status. Demosthenes gloried in the pos-

* Rawlinson, Hist. of the Five Ancient Monarchies of the East, vol. iii. pp. 90, 171-177 ; also vol. ii. p. 107 ; Lenormant, Ancient Hist. of the East, in loco.

† Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, p. 405, 406.

‡ Leviticus xviii.

§ Encyclopedie Universelle, Art. Mariage; Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. ii. p. 233.

session by his people of three classes of women, two of which furnished the legal and semi-legal wives.*

Among the Spartans, though the men were not allowed, unless under especial circumstances, to have more than one wife, the woman could have and almost always had, more than one husband.†

The peculiar circumstances under which the Roman state was originally constituted, prevented the introduction of legal polygamy. Whatever the historical truth of the Rape of the Sabines, the very existence of the tradition testifies to the causes which helped to form the primitive laws of the Romans on the subject of matrimony. In the surrounding states generally, and especially among the Etruscans, plurality of marriage was a privileged custom. The contact, for centuries, with the other nations of Italy—the wars and conquests of ages, combined with the luxurious habits which success engendered, at last resulted in making the sanctity of marriage a mere by-word amongst the Romans. Polygamy was not indeed legalised; but "after the "Punic triumphs, the matrons of Rome aspired to "the common benefits of a free and opulent repub-"lic, and their wishes were gratified by the indul-"gence of fathers and lovers."‡ Marriage soon

* Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. ii. p. 233-238. Comp. also Encyclopedie Universelle, Art. Mariage.

† Grote, Hist. of Greece, vol. vi. p. 136.

‡ Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Rom. Empire, vol. iv. p. 206.

became a simple practice of promiscuous concubinage. Concubinage, recognised by the laws of the state, soon acquired the force of a privileged institution. The freedom of women, the looseness of the tie which bound men to them, the frequency with which wives were changed or transferred, betoken in fact the prevalence of polygamy only under a different name.

In the meantime the doctrines of primitive Christianity, preached on the shores of Galilee, began to irradiate the whole Roman world. The influence of the Essenes, which is reflected visibly in the teachings of Jesus, combined with an earnest anticipation of the kingdom of Heaven, had led the Prophet of Nazareth to depreciate matrimony in general, although he never interdicted or expressly forbade its practice in any shape.

And so it was understood by the leaders of Christendom at various times—that there is no intrinsic immorality or sinfulness in plurality of wives. One of the greatest fathers of the Christian Church has declared, that polygamy is not a crime where it is a legal institution of a country;* and the German reformers, even as late as the sixteenth century, allowed and declared valid the taking of a second or even a third wife, contemporaneously with the first, in default of issue, or any other cause.†

* St. Augustine, lib. ii. cont. Faust, chap. xlvii.

† Comp. Hallam, Constit. Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 62, note.

Some scholars, whilst admitting that there is no intrinsic immorality in a plurality of wives, and that Jesus did not absolutely or expressly forbid the custom, hold that the present monogamous practice, in one sense general throughout Europe, arose from the engrafting of either Germanic or Hellenico-Roman notions on Christianity.* The latter view is distinctly opposed to fact and history, and deserves no credit. As regards the Germans, the proof of their monogamous habits and customs rests upon the uncorroborated testimony of one or two Romans, of all men the most untrustworthy witnesses to facts when it was to their interest to suppress them. Besides, we must remember the object with which Tacitus wrote his 'Manners of the Germans.' It was a distinct attack upon the licentiousness of his own people, and by contrasting the laxity of the Romans with the half-imaginary virtues of barbarians, was intended to introduce better ideas into Rome. Again, supposing that Tacitus is right, to what cause should we ascribe the polygamous habits of the higher classes of the Germans, even up to the nineteenth century.†

Whatever may have been the custom of the Romans in early times, it is evident that in the

* M. Barthelemy St. Hilaire appears to hold the opinion that monogamy was engrafted upon Christianity from Hellenic and Roman sources.

† Comp. Encyclopedie Universelle, Art. Mariage.

latter days of the Republic and the commencement of the Empire, polygamy must have been recognised as an institution, or at least not regarded as illegal. Its existence is assumed, and its practice recognised, by the Edict which interfered with its universality. How far the Prætorian Edict succeeded in remedying the evil, or diverting the current of public opinion, appears from the Rescript of the Emperors Honorius and Arcadius towards the end of the fourth century, and the practice of Constantine and his son, both of whom had several wives. The Emperor Valentinian II., by an Edict, allowed all the subjects of the empire, if they pleased, to marry several wives; nor does it appear from the ecclesiastical history of those times that the bishops and the heads of the Christian churches made any objection to this law.* Far from it, all the succeeding Emperors practised polygamy, and the people generally were not remiss in following their example. Even the clergy often had several wives.

This state of the laws continued until the time of Justinian, when the concentrated wisdom and experience of thirteen centuries of progress and development in the arts of life (combined with the Semitic influences not only of the two religions, but also of those great jurists who pre-eminently belonged to that race)—resulted in their embodiment in the cele-

* Comp. Encyclopedie Universelle, Art. Mariage, and Davenport, Apology for Mahomet.

brated laws of Justinian. But these laws owed little to Christianity, at least directly. The greatest adviser of Justinian was an atheist and a pagan.

Even the prohibition of polygamy by Justinian failed to check the tendency of the age. The law represented the advancement of thought; its influence was confined to a few thinkers, but to the mass it was practically a dead letter.

In the western parts of Europe, the tremendous upheaval of the barbarians, the intermingling of their moral ideas with those of the people among whom they settled, tended to degrade the relations between man and wife. Some of the barbaric codes attempted to deal with polygamy,* but example was stronger than precept, and the monarchs setting the fashion of plurality of wives, were quickly imitated by the people. Even the clergy, in spite of the recommendation to perpetual celibacy held out to them by the Church, availed themselves of the custom of keeping several left-handed wives, by a simple licence obtained from the bishop or the head of their diocese.†

The greatest and most reprehensible mistake committed by Christian writers is to suppose that Mohammed either adopted or legalized polygamy. The old idea of his having introduced it—a sign

* Like the laws of Theodoric. But they were based on advanced Byzantine notions.

* Comp. Hallam's Constitutional Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 78, and note; Middle Ages, p. 352 (1 vol. ed.)

only of the ignorance of those who held it—is by this time exploded; but the opinion that he adopted and legalized the custom is still maintained by the common masses as well as by many of the learned in Christendom. No belief can be more false.

Mohammed found polygamy practised not only among his own people, but amongst the people of the neighbouring countries, where it assumed some of its most frightful aspects. The laws of the Christian Empire had indeed tried to correct the evil, but without avail. Polygamy continued to flourish unchecked, and the wretched women, with the exception of the first wife selected according to priority of time, laboured under severe disabilities. Without rights, without any of the safeguards which law threw around the favoured first one, they were the slaves of every caprice and whim of their husbands.

The corruptness of morals in Persia about the time of the Prophet was fearful. There was no recognised law of marriage, or, if any existed, it was completely ignored. In the absence of any fixed rule in the Zend-Avesta as to the number of wives a man might possess, the Persians indulged in a multitude of regular matrimonial connections, besides having a number of concubines,*

Among Mahommed's own people, the Arabs, unlimited polygamy prevailed, prior to the promulga-

* Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. i. p. 406.

tion of Islâm. A man might marry as many wives as he could maintain, and repudiate them at will. A widow was considered as a sort of integral part of the heritage of her husband. Hence the frequent unions between stepsons and mothers-in-law, which, when subsequently forbidden by Islâm, were branded by the name of *Nikâh-ul-Makt*, "shameful or odious marriages."* Even polyandry was practised by the half-Jewish, half-Sabean tribes of Yemen.†

As the legislator of his own nation—the benefactor of the human race at large, it was Mohammed's mission to provide efficient remedies for all these accumulated evils. By limiting the maximum number of contemporaneous marriages, by giving rights and privileges to the wives as against their husbands; by making absolute equity towards all, obligatory on the man; by guarding against their being thrown helpless on the world at the wilful caprice of a licentious individual, Mohammed struck at the root of the evil.

But it is the negative part of the law which shows the profound depth underlying it. The proviso we refer to is not only qualitative in its character, but serves in fact to nullify the permissive clause. Construed plainly, it means—No man shall have more than one wife, if he cannot deal "justly" and equally

* Koran, chap. iv. 27; Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. p. 351; Ibn-Khaldûn.

† Lenormant, Anc. Hist. of the East, vol. ii. p. 318.

with all.* "In order to prevent persons," says Syed Ahmed, "from running into excess—which is "at all times bad, and sometimes dangerous—and "to render it certain that the person so having re- "course to polygamy was impelled by a real neces- "sity, many stringent restrictions and binding regu- "lations have been established, such as the ob- "servance of perfect equality of right and privileges, "love and affection, among all wives, etc. etc." The conditional clause added to the permissive part being essentially obligatory in its nature, non-compliance with its requisites lays the individual open to the charge of contravening the laws of Islâm. And hence in every way the law itself may be considered as prohibitive of a plurality of wives.†

The fact must be borne in mind that the existence of polygamy depends on circumstances. Certain times, certain conditions of society make its practice absolutely needful for the preservation of women from starvation or utter destitution.‡ This is a fact and we cannot blind ourselves to it.§

With the progress of thought, with the change of conditions ever going on in this world, the necessity

* Koran, chap. iv. v. 3. † See note I. to this chapter.

‡ If reports and statistics speak true, I should say that the greatest proportion of the frightful immorality prevalent in the centres of civilization in the West, arises from absolute destitution.

§ Abbé Huc and Lady Duff Gordon have both remarked that it is in the generality of cases, sheer necessity which drives people to polygamy in the East.

for polygamy, or more properly polygyny, disappears, and its practice is tacitly abandoned or expressly forbidden. And hence it is, that in those Mohammedan countries where the circumstances which made its existence at first necessary are disappearing, plurality of wives has come to be regarded as an evil, and as something opposed to the teachings of the Prophet;* while in those countries where the conditions of society are different, where the means, which in civilised communities enable women to help themselves, are absent or wanting, polygamy must necessarily continue to exist.

The compatibility of the laws of Mohammed with every stage of progress shows their founder's wisdom. The elasticity of laws is the great test of their beneficence and usefulness, and this merit is eminently possessed by those of Islâm.†

We have now to deal with a subject which to

* Note the curious growth of Mohammedan opinion on this subject, in India,—as portrayed in the Mohammedan Social Reformer.

† Perhaps the objection will be raised that as the freedom of construction leaves much to individual caprice, the total extinction of polygamy will be a hard task. Not so; the laws of Islâm provide means for its total abolition in any particular Moslem state, (in spite of the liberty of judgment allowed to each member) by an authoritative dictum of the jurists belonging to that state. But such a dictum can only result from freedom from the enthralment of old ideas, a general progress in the conception of facts and a proper understanding of the Prophet's teachings. Polygamy is disappearing, or will soon disappear under the new light in which the laws of the Prophet are being studied.

many minds not cognisant of the facts or not honest enough to appreciate them, seems to offer a fair ground of reproach against Mohammed. We mean his marriages. The Christian assailants of Mohammed maintain that in his own person, by frequent marriages he assumed a privilege not granted by the laws. A dispassionate examination of facts, a thorough analysis of motives from the standpoint of humanity will show us the extreme want of candour, fairness and simple charity* on the part of these writers.

When Mohammed was only twenty-five years of age, in the prime of life, and in the enjoyment of all his mental and physical powers, he married Khadîja, much his senior in years. For twenty-five years, his life with her was an uninterrupted sunshine of faithfulness and happiness. Through every contumely and outrage heaped on him by the Idolaters, through every persecution, Khadîja was his sole companion and helper. At the time of Khadîja's death, Mohammed was in the fifty-first year of his age. His enemies cannot deny, but are forced to admit, that during the whole of this long period, they have not a single flaw to find in his moral character. During the lifetime of Khadîja the Prophet

* We cannot say "Christian" charity, because with these men, the charity which Jesus inculcated, means the heaping of vituperation on all the benefactors of humanity unless of their Creed.

married no other wife, notwithstanding that public opinion among his people would have allowed him to do so, had he chosen.

Several months after Khadîja's death, and on his return helpless and persecuted from Tâyef, he married Saudâ, the widow of one Sakrân, who had embraced Islâm and had been forced to fly into Abyssinia to escape the persecutions of the Idolaters. Sakrân had died in exile, and left his wife utterly destitute, though one or two of her relations were living. Every principle of generosity and humanity would impel Mohammed to offer her his hand. Her husband had given his life in the cause of the new religion; he had left home and country for the sake of his faith; his wife had shared his exile, and now had returned to Mecca to find herself destitute. In the absence of any moral rule or positive law to forbid his alliance, shall we say, in the absence of any 'Home' to send her to, Mohammed, though poor and straitened for the very means of daily subsistence, married Saudâ.

Abdullah, the son of Othmân Abû Kuhâfa, known afterwards in history as Abû-Bakr, "the Father of the Virgin," was one of the most devoted followers of Mohammed. He was one of the earliest converts to the faith of the Prophet; and in his sincere, earnest and unvarying attachment to Mohammed, he might almost be compared with Ali. Abû-Bakr, as by anticipation we may well call him, had a little

daughter named Ayeshâ, and it was the desire of his life to cement the attachment which existed between himself and the Prophet, who had led him out from the darkness of scepticism—by giving him his daughter in marriage. The child was only seven years of age; but the manners of the country recognised such alliances. Ayeshâ was the only maiden whom Mohammed ever married.

Some time after his arrival at Medîna, Mohammed married Hafsa, the daughter of Omar who afterwards became the second Caliph. Hafsa had lost her husband in the battle of Bedr. Like her father, she possessed a fiery temper, which kept at a distance all intending suitors. Omar, at last, growing weary of seeing his daughter remain a widow so long, offered her hand first to Abû-Bakr and then to Othman. Both refused. This threw Omar into a rage so violent as to threaten the Moslem community with a civil broil. In this extremity, the chief of the Moslems appeased the enraged father, by himself marrying the daughter.*

Hind Umm Salmâ, Umm Habîba, and Zaynab *Umm-ul-masâkîn*,† three other wives of the Prophet, had also been widows whom the animosity of the tribes had bereft of their natural protectors, and whom their relations were either unable or unwilling to support.

* Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 89.

† "Mother of the poor," so called from her charity and benevolence.

Mohammed had married his devoted friend and freedman Zaid, to a high-born lady of the name of Zaynab, descended from two of the noblest families of Arabia. Proud of her birth, and perhaps also of her beauty, her marriage with a freedman rankled in her breast. Mutual aversion at last culminated in disgust. Probably this disgust on the husband's part was enhanced by the frequent repetition, in a manner which woman only knows how to adopt, of a few words which had fallen from the lips of Mohammed, on once accidentally seeing Zaynab. He had occasion to visit the house of Zaid, and upon seeing Zaynab's unveiled face, had exclaimed as a Moslem would say at the present day when admiring a beautiful picture or statue, "Praise be to God, the ruler of hearts!"

These words, uttered in natural admiration, were often repeated by Zaynab to her husband, to show how even the Prophet praised her beauty, and naturally added to his displeasure. At last he came to the decision not to live any longer with her, and with this determination he went to the Prophet and expressed his intention of being divorced. "Why," demanded Mohammed, "hast thou found any fault in her?" "No," replied Zaid, "but I can no longer live with her." The Prophet then peremptorily said, "Go and guard thy wife, treat her well and "fear God, for God has said, 'Take care of your "wives and fear the Lord.'" But Zaid was not

moved from his purpose, and in spite of the command of the Prophet, he divorced Zaynab. Mohammed was grieved at the conduct of Zaid, more especially as it was he who had arranged the marriage of these two uncongenial spirits.

A short time after this Zaynab sent a message to Mohammed, saying Zaid had repudiated her, and that she looked for support to the Prophet. Under these circumstances Mohammed married her.*

Another wife of Mohammed was called Juwairiya. She was the daughter of Hârith, the chief of the tribe of the Banî-Mustalik, and was taken prisoner by a Moslem in an expedition undertaken to repress their revolt.† She had made an agreement with her captor to purchase her freedom for a stipulated sum. She petitioned Mohammed for the amount, which he immediately gave her. In recognition of this kindness, and in gratitude for her liberty, she offered her hand to Mohammed, and they were married. As soon as

* Tabari (Zotenberg's Translation) vol. iii. p. 58. This marriage created a great uproar amongst the Idolaters, who, whilst marrying their mothers and mothers-in-law, looked upon the marriage of the divorced wife of an adopted son (as Zaid at one time was regarded by Mohammed) by the adoptive father, as highly culpable. To disabuse the people of the notion that adoption creates any such tie as real consanguinity, some verses of chap. xxxiii, were delivered, which destroyed the pagan custom of forbidding or making sacred the person of a wife, or husband, or intended wife or husband, by merely calling her mother, sister, father or brother,—much less by her or him being first allied to an adopted son or daughter.

† See ante, p. 118.

the Moslems heard of this alliance, they said amongst themselves the Banî-Mustalik are now connections of the Prophet, and we must treat them as such. Each victor, therefore, hastened to release the captives he had made in the expedition; and a hundred families, thus regaining their liberty, blessed the marriage of Juwairiya with Mohammed.*

Safiya, a Jewess had also been taken prisoner by a Moslem warrior in the expedition against Khaibar. Her, too, Mohammed generously liberated and elevated to the position of his wife with her free consent and at her request.

Maimûna, whom Mohammed married in Mecca, was his kinswoman and was already above fifty. Her marriage with Mohammed, besides providing for a poor relation the means of support, gained over to the cause of Islâm two famous men, Ibn-Abbâs, and Khâlid ibn Walîd, the leader of the Koreish cavalry in the disastrous battle of Ohod, and in later times the conqueror of the Greeks.

Such was the nature of the marriages of Mohammed. Some of them may possibly have arisen from a desire for male offspring, for he was not a god, and may have felt the natural wish to leave sons behind him. He may have wished also to escape from the nick-name which the bitterness of his enemies attached to him.† But taking the facts

* Ibn-Hishâm, p. 729.

† With savage bitterness the enemies of the Prophet applied to

as they stand, we see that even these marriages tended in their results to unite the warring tribes, and bring them into some degree of harmony.

The practice of *Thâr*, (vendetta) prevailed among the heathen Arabs; blood-feuds decimated tribes. There was not a family without its blood-feud, in which the males were frequently murdered and the females and children reduced to slavery. Moses had found the practice of *Thâr* existing among his people, (as it exists among all people in a certain stage of development), but failing to abolish it, had legalised it by the institution of sanctuaries. Mohammed, with a deeper conception of the remedies to be applied, connected various rival families and powerful tribes together and to himself by marriage ties. Towards the close of his mission, standing on the Mount of Arafât, he proclaimed that from that time all blood-feuds should cease.

The malevolence of unfair and uncandid enemies, has distorted the motives which, under the sanction of the great patriarchs of ancient times, led Moham-

him the nick-name of *al-abtar*, on the death of his last son. This word literally means "one whose tail has been cut off." Among the ancient Arabs, as among the Hindus, a male issue was regarded as the continuation of the blessings of the gods; and the man who left no male issue behind was looked upon as peculiarly unfortunate. Hence the bitter word applied to the Prophet. Koran, chap. cviii. (see the Kasshâf). Hence also the idolatrous Arabs used to bury alive their female offspring, which Mohammed denounced and reprehended in burning terms. Comp. Koran, xvii. 34, &c.

med to have a plurality of wives, and so provide helpless or widowed women with subsistence in the dearth of all other means. By taking them into the bosom of his family Mohammed provided for them, in the only way which the circumstances of the age and the people rendered possible.

People in the West are apt to regard polygamy as intrinsically evil, and its practice not only illegal but a result of licentiousness and immorality. They forget that all such institutions are the offspring of the circumstances and necessities of the times. They forget that the great patriarchs of the Hebraic race, who are regarded by the followers of all Semitic creeds as exemplars of moral grandeur, practised polygyny, to an extent which to our modern ideas seems the culmination of legalised immorality. We cannot perhaps allow their practice or conduct to pass unquestioned, in spite of the sanctity which time-honoured legend has cast around them. But in the case of the Prophet of Arabia, it is essential we should bear in mind the historic value and significance of the acts.

Probably it will be said that *no* necessity should have induced the Prophet, either to practise or to allow the continuance of such an evil custom as polygamy, and that he ought to have forbidden it absolutely, Jesus having overlooked it. But this custom, like many others, is not absolutely evil. Evil is a relative term. An act or usage may be,

primarily, quite in accordance with the moral conceptions of societies and individuals; but progress of ideas, and changes in the condition of a people, may make it evil in its tendency, and in process of time it may be made by the state, illegal. That ideas are progressive is a truism; but that usages and customs depend on the progress of ideas, and are good or evil according to circumstances, or as they are or are not in accordance with the conscience—'the spirit'—of the time, is a fact much ignored by superficial thinkers.

The subject of divorce has proved a fruitful source of misconception and controversy.

Among all the nations of the world, from time immemorial, the right of divorce has been regarded as a necessary corollary to the law of marriage. But this right, with few exceptions, was *exclusively* reserved for the benefit of the stronger sex. Among the Jews, the laws of Moses regulated the right of divorce; and this so-called right was not exercised only on occasions of infidelity to the marriage bed on the part of the wife, but for any reason which made the wife distasteful to the husband. Women were not allowed to demand a divorce from their husbands for any reason whatever.*

Among the Romans, the legality of the practice of

* Ex. xxi. 2; Deut. xxi. 14; xxiv. 1. Compare also Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. ii. pp. 339, 340; and Selden's Uxor Hebræa, in loco.

divorce was recognised from the earliest times. The laws of the Twelve Tables admitted divorce. And if the Romans, as is stated by their admirers, did not take advantage of this law until 500 years after the foundation of their city, it was not because they were more exemplary than other nations; but because the husband possessed the power of summarily putting his wife to death, for acts like poisoning, drinking and the substitution of a spurious child. But the wife had no right to sue for a divorce,* and if she solicited separation, her temerity made her liable to punishment. But in the later Republic the frequency of divorce was at once the sign, the cause, and the consequence of the rapid depravation of morals.†

We have selected the two most prominent nations of antiquity, whose modes of thought have acted most powerfully on modern ways of thinking, and modern life and manners. The laws of the Romans, regarding divorce, were marked by a progressive spirit, tending to the melioration of the condition of women, and to their elevation to an equality with men. This was the result of the advancement of human ideas, as much as the result of any extraneous cause.

"The ambiguous word which contains the precept

* Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. ii. p. 255.

† An observation of Milman, Latin Christianity, vol. i. p. 367. I give the passage without absolutely endorsing the statement that divorce is necessarily evil, see post.

" of Jesus is flexible to any interpretation that the " wisdom of the legislator can demand."* We may well suppose that at the time Jesus uttered the words, "What God has joined let not man put asunder," he had no other idea but that of stemming the torrent of moral depravity, and he did not stop to consider the ultimate tendency of his words. The subsequent rule, which makes fornication† (using the translated word) the only ground of valid divorce, shows abundantly that Jesus was alive to the emergency. But the " wisdom " of subsequent legislators has not confined itself to a blind adherence to a rule laid down probably to suit the requirements of an embryonic community and delivered verbally. The rule may be regarded as inculcating a noble sentiment, but that it should be considered as the typical law of divorce is sufficiently controverted by the multitudinous provisions of successive ages in Christian countries.‡

Mohammed, whilst looking upon divorce in the abstract with extreme disapproval, and regarding its practice as calculated to undermine the foundations of society, at the same time made sufficient allowance, by a wise prevision, for the emergencies which, as long as human nature continues in its

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. iv. (2nd Ed.) p. 209.

† Matt. xix. 9. See note II. to this chapter.

‡ Compare Blackstone's Commentary on the Laws of England, vol. ii. Bk. 3.

present condition, must necessarily arise at times in the bosom of families. Syed Ahmed speaks thus: —"Our Prophet neither underrated nor undervalued "divorce. He constantly pointed out to his fol- "lowers how opposed it was to the best interests of "society; he always expatiated upon the evils which "flowed from it, and ever exhorted his disciples to "treat women with respect and kindness.* . . . . "Notwithstanding, however, Mohammed's rooted "antipathy to divorce, he gave it the importance "and consideration it justly claimed and merited. "He allowed it under circumstances when it could "not fail to prove a valuable boon; when it either "entirely removed, or at least greatly alleviated, "the cares, troubles and embitterments of wedded "life; and when, if not taken advantage of, society "would suffer still more than it already did. In "such cases, divorce is far from being a disadvan- "tage to society; it is, on the contrary, a blessing "and an efficient means of bettering the social con- "dition. Mohammed did not restrict himself to "merely allowing divorce to be adopted under cir- "cumstances; he permitted to divorced parties

* With these remarks of Syed Ahmed ought to be compared the traditions handed down by Muâdh-ibn-Jabal. In one of these traditions, Mohammed says, "God has not created anything on earth "which he likes better than the emancipating of slaves; nor has "he created anything which he dislikes more than divorce." (Mishkât and the Sahîh of Bukhârî.) Similar traditions are found in the Shiite Bahâr-ul-Anwâr, and prove the extreme aversion of Mohammed to divorce in the abstract.

"three several distinct and separate periods within "which they might endeavour to become reconciled, "and renew their conjugal intercourse ;* but should "all attempts to become reconciled prove unsuccess- "ful, then the third period, in which the final separa- "tion was declared to have arrived, supervened."†

M. Sédillot, than whom no Western writer has analysed the laws of Mohammed better, has the following passage on the subject: — "Divorce was "authorised,‡ but subjected to formalities which "allowed (and we will add, recommended) a revo- "cation of a hurried or not well considered resolu- "tion. Three successive declarations at a month's "interval were necessary in order to make it irre- "vocable."§ The wife also was entitled to demand a separation on the ground of ill-usage, want of proper maintenance, and various other causes.‖ But unless she showed very good and solid grounds

* Tradition reports that once one of his disciples repudiated his wife by declaring his intention thrice, at one and the same time, without allowing the legal interval between each declaration of his wish; this having come to the ears of the Prophet, he was so moved as to lead those about him to suppose that the offending disciple had committed some crime of a most heinous character.

† Syed Ahmed Khan, Ess. IV. p. 14.

‡ Koran, chap. ii. ver. 226.

§ Sédillot, Histoire des Arabes, p. 85. See note III. to this chapter.

‖ Comp. the Hidâyâ and the Mabsût in loco, and also, Querry, Droit Musulman. Sale also gives a very fair summary of the Sonnite views on the subject.

for demanding the separation, she lost her "settlement" or dowry. In every case, however, when the divorce originated with the husband (except in cases of open infidelity), he had to give up to her everything he settled upon her at her marriage.*

The frequent admonitions in the Koran against separations; the repeated commendation to heal quarrels by private reconciliation show the extreme sacredness of the marriage tie in the eyes of the Arab Legislator:—

"If a woman fear ill-usage or aversion from her "husband, it shall not be blameable in them† if they "agree with mutual agreement; for reconciliation "(or agreement) is best. (Men's) souls are prone "to avarice; but if ye act kindly and deal piously,‡ "verily God is well acquainted with what ye do. "And ye will not have it at all in your power to "treat your wives alike with equity, even though "you fain would do so;§ yet yield not to your

* Comp. the Islamic provisions with those of the most perfect Roman law, developed in the bosom of the Church. See Milman, Latin Christ. vol. i. pp. 368, 369.

† The spirit of the Arabic expression means, "it will be commendable," &c.

‡ Towards wives.

§ This furnishes another argument against those Mohammedans who hold that the developed laws of Islâm allow plurality of wives; for, equity and justice being declared absolutely obligatory in a man's conduct towards his wives—and it being also declared that such equity is beyond human power to observe—we must naturally

"inclinations ever so much,* as to leave her in sus-
"pense; and if ye agree, and act piously, then
"verily God is forgiving and merciful."†

And again, in a preceding verse, it is declared:—
"And if ye fear a breach between them (man and
"wife), then send a judge chosen from his family,
"and a judge chosen from her family; if they de-
"sire a reconciliation, God will cause them to agree;
"verily, God is knowing and apprised of all."‡

Such are the laws of Mohammed regarding divorce. To us they seem as complete as they are wise in their ultimate tendency. It has been frequently said, that Mohammed allowed his followers, besides the four legitimate wives, to take to themselves any number of female slaves. A simple statement of the regulation on this point will show at once how opposed this notion is to the true precepts of Islâm:—"Whoso among you hath not the
"means to marry a free believing woman, then let
"him marry such of your maid-servants as have fallen
"into your hands as bondswomen. This is allowed
"unto him among you who is afraid of committing

infer that the Legislator had in view the merging of the lower in the higher principle, and the abolition of a custom which, though necessary in some state of society, is opposed to the later development of thought and morals.

* In the original, "Kul-ul-mail," = all, any, or every inclination; the word *kul* has a varied signification.

† Koran, chap. iv. vers. 127, 128.

‡ Koran, chap. iv. ver. 39.

"sin; but if ye abstain,* it will be better for "you."†

As regards the general condition of women, the amelioration Islâm effected in their status is alone sufficient to stamp it as one of the most beneficent institutions the world has seen. We have already glanced at the position occupied by woman among the different nations of antiquity; we now come to an examination of her position in Christianity and Judaism.

The Hebrew maiden, even in her father's house, stood in the position of a servant,‡ her father could sell her if a minor; he, and after his death, his son, disposed of his daughter at their will and pleasure. The daughter inherited nothing, except in the extremest case.§

Christianity, by introducing convents and nunneries into Europe, served in some respects to alleviate the lot of women in "the gloomy interval" which elapsed "between the fall of the Roman

* From allying yourself with slaves.

† On this slender basis, and perhaps on some temporary accidental circumstances connected with the early rise of the Moslem Commonwealth, have our legists based the usage of holding (jâryas) female slaves. And this, though opposed to the spirit of the Master's precepts, has given rise to some of the strongest animadversions of rival religionists. We will recur to this subject when treating of slavery in general.

‡ Numbers xxx. 17.

§ Comp. throughout Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, vol. ii. p. 341.

empire and the rise of modern society"* in the West. But in spite of this questionable amelioration, which was only suited for an age of "rapine, "falsehood, tyranny, lust, and violence," when the abduction of women was an everyday occurrence, when the dissoluteness of morals was as fearful as in the days of Charles II. or Louis Quinze†—woman occupied a very low position indeed, especially in legislation. Christianity had placed the sex under a ban. Father after Father had written upon the enormities of women, their evil tendencies, their inconceivable malignity. Tertullian represented the general feeling in a book, and Chrysostom, whom the Christians recognise as a saint, "interpreted "the general opinion of the Fathers," says Lecky, "when he pronounced woman to be a necessary "evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, "a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, a painted "ill." And this at a time when the worship of the mother of Jesus was regarded as a sacred duty!

Mohammed had proclaimed as one of the essential teachings of his creed, "respect for women." Islâm secured them rights, allowed them privileges, and put them on a footing of perfect equality with men, excepting so far as physical differences went. Islâm

* Massey, Hist. of England during the Reign of George III., vol. ii. p. 6.

† Ibid.

introduced true chivalry into the world.* The romantic devotion of the Arab cavaliers of Andalusia to the fair sex, the magnanimity of Ali and his sons in the East, had resulted in forming an unwritten code of honour. Oelsner calls Antâr "the Father of Chivalry." Ali was the beau-ideal of Chivalry—an impersonation of gallantry, of bravery, of generosity; pure, gentle and learned, "without fear and without reproach," he set the world the noblest example of chivalrous grandeur of character. His spirit, a pure reflection of that of his Master, overshadowed the Islâmic world, and formed the animating genius of succeeding ages. The wars of the Crusades, which brought barbarian Europe into contact with the civilisation of the Islâmic East, and opened its eyes to the magnificence and refinement of the Moslems; but especially the influences of Mohammedan Andalusia on the neighbouring Christian provinces—led to the introduction of chivalry into Europe. The troubadours, the trouveurs and the minnesingers of Southern France, who sung of love and honour in war, were the immediate disciples of the *romanceurs* of Cordova, Grenada and Malaga. Petrarch and Boccaccio, even Tasso and Chaucer derived their in-

* Compare the following remark of Burton: "Were it not evident "that the spiritualising of sexuality is universal amongst the highest "orders of mankind, I should attribute the origin of love to the in- "fluence of the Arab's poetry and chivalry upon European ideas "rather than to mediæval Christianity." Burton, A Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah, p. 326.

spiration from the Islâmic fountain-head. But the coarse habits and thoughts of the barbarian hordes of Europe communicated a character of grossness to pure chivalry.*

* For the general rules in Islâm regarding the rights and privileges of women, consult the Majâlis-ul-Abrâr, *Majlis* (séance) xc.

NOTE I. TO CHAPTER XIV.

My English readers perhaps do not know that in India, especially in the north-western parts, the practice of polygamy is exceedingly limited. Ninety-five Moslems out of every hundred are perfect monogamists. Generally, public opinion reprobates the taking of a second wife; and the difficulty of affording another establishment represses the desires of those who may feel inclined to contemn the opinion of their neighbours. Another, and the most efficacious check, is employed by the relatives of the intended wife: a deed has to be drawn up by the bridegroom, before the other terms are settled, covenanting that he would never take another wife; in case of breach, he covenants to pay a heavy sum, always beyond his means. This effectually prevents his marrying another wife.

The wives, among the better classes of the Indian Moslems, possess more privileges than those allowed even in Europe. Here, a wife is perfectly in the power of her husband; she has to submit to all his caprices, excepting in so far as public opinion keeps him within bounds; she is not the mistress of her own property. In India, among the Moslems, she is a perfect free agent; there is no law of "coverture" or "merger;" if the husband feels inclined to keep his wife waiting till the small hours, he has to submit to be "chained out." Within her own domains she is an absolute sovereign.

NOTE II. TO CHAPTER XIV.

Two of the Christian Gospels make no mention of the reason for which Jesus allowed his followers "to put away" their wives, (Mark x. 11, and Luke xvi. 18). If the traditions recorded by these two Gospels be considered of higher authority than those passing under the name of Matthew, then our contention is that Jesus, whilst preaching noble sentiments and inculcating high principles of morality, either intended his words should not be considered as an immutable and positive law, nor had any other idea than that of stemming the rising tide of immorality and irreligion. Selden thinks that by an evasive answer Jesus wanted to avoid giving offence either to the school of Shammai or to that of Hillel. Uxor Hebraica, l. iii. c. 18-22, 28, 31. Compare Gibbon's valuable note on the interpretation of the word, *πορνεία*, rendered "fornication" in the English version. Vol. iv. (2nd Ed.) p. 209.

NOTE III. TO CHAPTER XIV.

M. Sédillot also speaks of the condition which (according to the Sonnite doctrines) requires, that in such cases of complete separation, prior to the husband and wife coming together again, the latter should marry another and be divorced anew,—as a very wise measure which rendered separation more rare. Muir censures Mohammed for making such a condition necessary, (vol. iii. p. 306). He ignores (whether intentionally or not, is not for me to determine) that among a proud, jealous and sensitive race like the Arabs, such a condition was one of the powerful guarantees against the capricious exercise of the power of separation allowed to both man and wife. The very proverb he quotes ought to have shown the disgrace which was attached to the man who would make his wife go through such "a disgusting ordeal." I am afraid, in his dislike towards Mohammed, Sir W. Muir forgot that this condition was intended as a check on that other "revolting" practice, rife both among the Jews and the heathen Arabs, and by example also among the Christians, of repudiating a wife on every slight occasion, at every outburst of senseless passion or caprice. This check was intended to control one of the most sensitive nations of the

earth, by acting on the strongest feeling of their nature—the sense of honour. (Compare Sale, Preliminary Discourse, p. 134). Sir W. Muir also forgot that the Shiite doctors do *not* recognise the obligation or validity of the wife's being married to a third person, prior to her being taken back; (compare Malcolm, History of Persia, vol. ii. p. 241, and the Mabsût in loco).

For my part, I believe in the correctness of the Shiite construction, namely, that the verse which says, "When ye divorce women, and the "time for sending them away is come, either retain them with "generosity or send them away with generosity; but retain them not "by constraint so as to be unjust towards them," abrogates *in toto* the preceding verse which requires the intervention of a third person.

CHAPTER XV.

In some features slavery may be aptly compared with polygamy. Like polygamy it has existed among all nations, and has died away with the progress of human thought. Like polygamy, it has been a natural outgrowth of some of the phases of the mental and physical development of man. But unlike polygamy, it bears from its outset the curse of inherent injustice.

In the early stages of mankind, when the human mind has not grown to the full appreciation of the reciprocal rights and duties of mankind; when laws are made for a section, or by a section, rather than by the whole community; when the will of the strong is the rule of life and the guide of conduct; then the necessary inequality, social, physical, or mental, engendered by Nature among men, or bodies of men, invariably takes the form of slavery; and a system arises which allows absolute power to the superior over the inferior.* This complete subserviency of the weak to the powerful saved the latter

* Comp. throughout "de l'Influence des Croisades sur l'État des Peuples de l'Europe," by Maxime de Choiseul D'Aillecourt, Paris, 1809.

the trouble of preparing rules for the guidance of their "servants." It often enabled them to escape from the mythical curse laid on man—"In the sweat "of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return "to the ground," and allowed them to employ the leisure thus acquired in congenial pursuits. "The "simple wish," says the author of Ancient Law, "to "use the bodily powers of another person as the "means of ministering to one's own ease or pleasure, "is doubtless the foundation of slavery, and as old "as human nature."*

The practice of slavery may, therefore, be regarded as co-eval with human existence. Historically its traces are visible in every age and in every nation of which we have any positive information. It commenced in the barbarous, we may say, savage state of society, and was retained even when the progress of ideas and material civilisation had done away with its necessity. The nations of antiquity most famous for countenancing the system of domestic slavery were the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, and the ancient Germans ;† amongst all of whom it prevailed, but in various degrees of severity.

Among the Jews, from the commencement of their existence as a nation, two forms of slavery were

* Maine, Ancient Law, p. 104.

† Cæsar (De Bell. Gall. lib. vi.), Tacitus (De Moribus German. cap. 24-25), and Pothier (De stat. servor. apud Germ. lib. I.), all testify to the extreme severity of German servitude.

practised. The Israelite slave, given into bondage as a punishment for crime, or for the payment of a debt, occupied a higher position than a slave of alien birth. The law allowed the former his liberty, after six years of servitude, unless he refused to avail himself of his right. But the foreign slaves, whether belonging to the people whom the Israelites had reduced into absolute helotage by a merciless system of warfare, or whether acquired in treacherous forays, or by purchase, were entirely excluded from the benefits of this arrangement, an arrangement made in a spirit of national partiality and characteristic isolation.* The lot of these bondsmen and bondswomen was one of unmitigated hardship. Helots of the soil or slaves of the house, hated and despised at the same time, they lived a life of perpetual drudgery in the service of pitiless masters.

Excepting a few remarks† on the disobedience of servants (slaves) to their masters, and advice to masters to give servants their due, the teachings of Jesus, as portrayed in the Christian traditions, contain but few passages expressive of disapproval of bondage. On the contrary, we might conclude from the passages referred to, that neither Jesus nor his reporters ever intended to denounce slavery as a curse to humanity.

Among the Romans, slavery flourished from the

* Levit. xxv. 44, 45.

† 1 Tim. chap. vi. 1, 2.

earliest period. The slaves, whether of native or of foreign birth, whether acquired by war or purchase, were regarded simply as chattels. Their masters possessed the power of life and death over them. But that gradual improvement, which had raised the archaic laws of the Twelve Tables to the comprehensive grandeur of the Code of Hadrian, introduced some amelioration in the condition of the slaves. The power of capital and other severe punishments was taken away from the master, yet even the advanced Roman law would not allow a slave to enter into any "obligation" with his master or mistress.*

Before, therefore, the teachings of Jesus had given to the world the grand doctrine of universal fraternity which his disciples failed miserably to grasp, the laws and regulations of the Empire regarding slavery had undergone an unparalleled development, as compared with the summary mode prevalent among the most civilised nations who preceded the Romans.

The introduction of Christianity into the Empire, affected slavery only so far as it regarded the priesthood. A slave could become free, by adopting monachism if not claimed within three years.† But in the relations of private life, slavery flourished in as varied shapes, as under the pagan domination. The Digest, compiled under a Christian emperor,

* Comp. the Institutes, in loco.

† Comp. Milman, Latin Christianity, vol. i. p. 358.

pronounced slavery a constitution of the law of nature,* and the code fixed the maximum price of slaves according to the professions for which they were intended. Marriages between slaves were not legal, and between the slave and the free, they were prohibited under frightful penalties.† The natural result was unrestrained concubinage, which even the clergy recognised and practised.‡

Such was slavery under the most advanced system of laws known to the ancient world. These reflected the wisdom of thirteen centuries, and towards the close of their development, had engrafted upon themselves some faint offshoots of the teachings of one of the greatest Preceptors of the world.

With the establishment of the Western and Northern barbarians on the ruins of the Roman Empire, besides personal slavery, territorial servitude scarcely known to the Romans, became general in all the newly-settled countries. The various rights possessed by the lords over their vassals and serfs, exhibit a frightful picture of

* Dig. l. 5, s. 4.

† One of the punishments was, if a free woman married a slave, she was to be put to death and the slave burnt alive. Comp. the splendid though apologetic chapter of Milman on the subject. Latin Christianity, vol. ii.

‡ Comp. Milman, Latin Christ. vol. ii. p. 369; and also Du Cange, Concubina.

moral depravity and degradation.* The Barbaric codes, like the Roman, regarded slavery as an ordinary condition of mankind, and if any protection was afforded to the slave, it was chiefly as the property of his master who, alone, besides the state, had the power of life and death over him.

We see now that Christianity failed utterly in abolishing slavery or alleviating its evils. The Church itself held slaves, and recognised in explicit terms, the lawfulness of this baneful institution. Under its influence the greatest civilians of Europe have upheld slavery, and have insisted upon its usefulness, as preventing the increase of pauperism and theft.†

The Islâmic Code dealt a blow at the institution of slavery, which, had it not been for the deep root it had taken among the surrounding nations and the natural perversion and obliquity of the human mind, would have been completely extinguished, as soon

*' Comp. De Choiseul, and also consult on this subject the comprehensive chapter of Stephen's Commentaries on the laws of England, Bk. ii. Pt. i. chap. ii. One of the miserable and disgusting privileges possessed by the lord was designated in Britain the custom of *culiage*, which was afterwards commuted into a fine. This custom, as has been correctly supposed, gave rise to the law of inheritance prevalent in some English counties and known by the name of Borough-English.

† Pufendorf, Law of Nature and Nations, Bk. vi. c. 3, s. 10; Ulricus Huberus, Praelect. Jur. Civ. l. i. tit. 4, s. 6; Pothier, De Statu Servorum; and Grotius, de Jure Bell. l. ii. c. 5, s. 27.

as the generation which then practised it, had passed away. The provisions of the Islâmic laws with regard to slavery may be looked upon from two points of view. The one showing that Islâm completely abolished the system; the other, that by connecting the most onerous responsibilities with its practice, Mohammed's religion provided for its gradual but absolute extinction.

It has been justly contended, that as the promulgation of the laws, precepts and teachings of Islâm extended over twenty years, it is naturally to be expected, many of the pre-Islamite institutions which were eventually abolished, were at first either tacitly permitted or expressly recognised.* In one of these categories stood the usage of slavery. The evil was intertwined with the inmost relations of the people among whom Mohammed flourished. Its extinction was only to be achieved by the continued agency of wise and humane laws, and not by the sudden and entire emancipation of the existing slaves, which was morally and economically impossible. Therefore numberless provisions, negative as well as positive, were introduced in order to promote a gradual enfranchisement. A contrary policy would have produced an utter collapse of the infant commonwealth.

Mohammed exhorted his followers repeatedly, in

* Tahzîb-ul-Akhlâk, (15th Rajab, 1288), p. 118.

the name of the God who had sent him to regenerate degraded humanity, to enfranchise slaves, "than "which there was not a more acceptable act to God." He ruled that for certain sins of omission, the penalty should be the manumission of slaves. He ordered that a slave should be allowed to buy himself off by the wages of his service; and that in case the unfortunate beings had no present means of gain, and wanted to earn in some other employment enough to purchase their liberty, they should be allowed to leave the service they were in, on an agreement to that effect.* He also provided that sums should be advanced to the slaves from the public treasury to purchase their liberty. In certain contingencies, it was provided that the slave should become enfranchised without the interference and even against the will of his master. The contract or agreement in which the least doubt was discovered was construed most favourably in the interests of the slave; and the slightest promise on the part of the master was made obligatory for the purposes of enfranchisement. Such were the regulations for the gradual emancipation of slaves. In the moral rules laid down for the treatment of those then in bondage Mohammed did not prescribe the reciprocal duties of masters and slaves in the one-sided manner so often visible in other creeds.† With a deeper and truer know-

* Koran, chap. xxiv. 23, etc.

† Colossians, chap. iii. ver. 22 Timothy, chap. vi. ver. 1.

ledge of human nature, he saw that it was not so needful to lay down the duties the weak owed to the strong,—as those, the strong owed to the weak. The masters were forbidden to exact more work than was just and proper. They were ordered never to address their male or female slaves by that degrading appellation, but by the more affectionate name of "my young man," or, "my young maid;" it was enjoined that all slaves should be dressed, clothed, and fed exactly as their masters and mistresses. Above all, it was ordered that in no case should the mother be separated from the child; nor brother from brother; nor father from son; nor any relative from another relative.* Even without contending with the able author of the paper on slavery in the Mohammedan Social Reformer, that the words of the Koran only applied to the existing state of things (as regarded the holding of slaves), and had no prospective meaning, we must state our firm belief that, from the regulations above described and the significance of the expression applied to slaves and slavery, the Legislator himself looked upon the custom as temporary in its nature, and held that its extinction was sure to be achieved

* I see no need of quoting authorities on these points, as they are admitted facts. But I may refer the curious reader to the traditions collected in the Mishkât, the Sahîh of Bukhârî, and the Bahâr-ul-Anwâr. The latter contains the noblest monuments of generosity and charity practised by the Prophet's immediate descendants.

by the progress of ideas and change of circumstances. In the Koran, the slaves are almost invariably called "those whom your right hands possess," or as some contend "have become possessed of." Without entering into the consequences that might seem to result from the slight variation in the interpretation of the terms, we hold that the definition of slaves as those whom our right hands possess, or who have become captives in our hands, was intended to restrict absolutely the means of acquisition of bondsmen or bondswomen. They were only to be acquired in one way—and that in *bonâ fide* legal warfare, when captives fell into the hands of the soldiers. Among all barbarous nations, the captives are spared from a motive of selfishness alone,* in order to add to the wealth of the individual captor or of the collective nation, by their sale-money or by their labour.† Like other nations of antiquity, the Arab of the pre-Islamite period, spared the lives of his captives for the sake of profiting by them. Mohammed found this custom existing among his people. Instead of theorising, or

* Comp. Milman, Latin Christ. vol. ii. p. 387. The ancient jurists based the right of enslaving the captive on the prior right of killing him. In this, they are followed by Albericus Gentilis (De Jur. Gent. cap. de Servitute), Grotius, and Pufendorf. Montesquieu; indeed, was the first to deny this mythical right of killing a captive, unless in case of absolute necessity, or for self-preservation. And this the author of the "Spirit of Laws" denied, because of his freedom from the thraldom of the Church.

† Comp. Milman, Hist. of the Jews, vol. iii. p. 48.

dealing in vague platitudes, he laid down strict rules for their guidance, enjoining that those only may be held in bond, who were taken in *bonâ fide* legal war, until they were ransomed, or the captive bought his or her own liberty by the wages of service. But even when these means failed, an appeal to the pious feelings of the Moslem, combined with the onerous responsibilities attached to the possession of a slave, was often enough to secure the eventual enfranchisement of the latter. Slave-lifting and slave-dealing—patronised by dominant Christianity, and sanctified by Judaism—were utterly reprobated and condemned. The man who dealt in slaves was declared the outcast of humanity.* Enfranchisement of slaves was declared to be the noblest act of virtue. It was also declared in absolute terms, that a Moslem, male or female, should never be reduced to slavery. To the lasting disgrace of the majority of the followers of Mohammed it must be said, however, that, whilst observing, or trying to observe the letter, they have utterly ignored the spirit of the Teacher's precepts, and allowed slavery to flourish (in direct contravention of the injunctions of the Prophet) by purchase and other means. The possession of a slave by the Koranic laws was conditional on a *bonâ fide* struggle, in self-defence, against unbelieving and

* According to a tradition from Imâm Jâfar Sâdik, (Bahâr-ul-Anwâr.)

idolatrous aggressors, and its permission was a guarantee for the safety and preservation of the captives. The cessation of the state of war in which the Moslem community was at first involved, from the animosity of the surrounding tribes and nations, would have brought about the extinction of slavery by a natural process,—the stoppage of future acquisition and the enfranchisement of those in bondage. However, whether from contact with the demoralised nations of the East and the West, and the wild races of the North (among all of whom slavery was ingrained) or perhaps, as seems more probable, from the time not having then arrived to show the full fruits of those beneficial laws and precepts,—the majority of the Moslems, like the Christians and the Jews, recognised slavery, and to some extent do so even now. But the wild Turkoman, who glories in slave-lifting, is no more a representative of Islâm than is the barbarous Guacho, who revels on the savage prairies of South America, of Christianity. Like polygamy, the institution of slavery, prevalent universally among mankind at some stage or other of their growth, has—at least among the nations which claim to be civilised—outlived the necessities which induced its practice, and must sooner or later become extinct. It will be seen, therefore, that Islâm did not "consecrate" slavery, as has been erroneously supposed, but provided in every way for its abolition and extinction, by circumscribing the means of possession within

the narrowest limits. Islâm did not deal capriciously with this important question. Whilst proclaiming in the most emphatic terms the natural equality of human beings, it did not, regardless of consequences, enfranchise the men and women already in bondage, which would have only been productive of evil in a world not then ripe for that grand consummation of human liberty, moral and intellectual.

The time is now arrived when humanity at large, should raise its voice against the practice of servitude, in whatever shape or under whatever denomination it may be disguised. The Moslems especially, for the honour of their noble Prophet, should try to efface that dark page from their history—a page which would never have been written but for their contravention of the spirit of his laws, but which appears bright by the side of the ghastly scrolls on which the deeds of the professors of the rival creeds are recorded. The day is come, when the voice which proclaimed liberty, equality and universal brotherhood among all mankind should be heard with the fresh vigour acquired from the spiritual existence and spiritual pervasion of thirteen centuries. It remains for the Moslems to show the falseness of the aspersions cast on the memory of the great and noble Prophet, by proclaiming in explicit terms that slavery is reprobated by their Faith, and discountenanced by their Code. So will they add to their glory and his, and to the glory, if

human lips can pronounce it, of that Eternal Being who endowed the Legislator with the genius to evolve such laws of wisdom.*

NOTE TO CHAPTER XV.

Karmath, who flourished in the tenth century of the Christian era, and whose name, justly or unjustly, has become infamous among the orthodox section at least of the Moslems, was the first to proclaim to the world that Islâm forbade slavery. Whether he was all that he is painted is doubtful; but it is certain that many of the iniquities practised by his disciples (among whom was Hassan Sâbâh, the "Old man of the Mountain,") have come to be ascribed to Karmath. Karmath is said to have belonged to the Bâtinyâ school which held that the religion of Mohammed, like the ancient faiths, had two significations, one esoteric, the other exoteric; see the splendid resumé of their doctrines in Shahrastânî, p. 147. (Cureton's Ed.)

CHAPTER XVI.

THE idea of a future existence—of an existence after the separation of the living principle of our nature from the mortal part—is one of the most wonderful phenomena of the human mind. It is so generally shared by races of men otherwise utterly distinct from each other, that it has led to the belief that such an idea must be one of the first elementary constituents of our being. A more careful examination of facts connected with the infancy of races and tribes, would lead us to the conclusion that the conception of a future existence is also the result of the natural development of the human mind.

The wild savage has scarcely any idea of a life separate and distinct from that which he enjoys on earth. The Dhangar, the cannibal Andamanese, look upon death as the end of existence. Then comes a later stage, when the mind of man has passed out of its savage state; and when its hopes and aspirations are not bounded by an earthly death; when it anticipates another course of exist-

ence after the course here has been fulfilled. But even in this stage, the human conception does not rise out of the groove of daily life. Life after death is a mere continuation of life on earth; though with fewer famines to fear; with more to live upon. This idea of a continued life beyond the grave, must have been developed from the yet unconscious longing of the human soul for a more extended sphere, where the separation of dear friends, so painful to both savage and civilised man, should end in re-union.

The next stage is soon reached; man comes to believe that present happiness and misery are not, cannot be, the be-all and end-all of his existence; that there will be another life, or that there is another life after death, where he will be happy or miserable in proportion to his deserts.*

Now we have reached a Principle and a Law.

The mind of man goes no further towards developing the idea of future existence. The nihilistic philosopher makes no discovery, asserts no new position. He is only treading in the footsteps of our savage ancestor, whose field of vision was restricted to this life and this alone. Human thought, at least here, runs in a cycle!

It is a well-authenticated fact, however, that all those ideas which represent the various stages, from

* Comp. throughout Tylor's Primitive Culture.

a subjective point of view, exist simultaneously not only among different nations, but even in the same nation, in different combinations, according to the individual development.

The Egyptians are said to have been the first to recognise the doctrine of a future life; or at least to base the principles of human conduct on such a doctrine. With an idea of metempsychosis they joined an idea of future recompense and punishment. Man descended into the tomb only to rise again. After his resurrection he entered on a new life, in company with the sun, the principle of generation, the self-existent cause of all. The soul of man was considered immortal like the sun, and as accomplishing the same pilgrimages. All bodies descended into the lower world; but they were not all assured of resurrection. The deceased were judged by Osiris and his forty-two assessors. Annihilation was often believed to be the lot of those adjudged guilty. The righteous, purified from venial faults, entered into perfect happiness; and, as the companions of Osiris, were fed by him with delicious food.*

We might naturally expect that the long stay of the Israelites in Egypt would introduce among them some conception of a future life, with its concomitant idea of rewards and punishments. But pure

* Comp. Lenormant, Ancient Hist. of the East, vol. i. pp. 319-322; and Alger, Hist. of the Doctrine of a Future Life, p. 102, et seq.

Mosaism (or the teachings which pass under that name) does not recognise a state of existence differing from the present. The pivot on which the entire system of Mosaic legislation turns, consists of tangible earthly rewards and punishments.* The vitality of the laws is confined within a very small compass. The doctrine of a resurrection, with the ideas arising from it which appears in later Judaism —especially in the writings of Daniel and Ezekiel— is evidently a fruit of foreign growth, derived from Zoroastrian sources. Even the descriptions of Sheol, the common sojourn of departed beings, equally of the just and unjust, which appear in comparatively early writings, do not seem of true Hebraic origin, so utterly do they differ from Semitic conceptions. In Sheol man can no longer praise God or remember his loving kindness.† It is a shadow-realm, a Jewish counterpart of the heathen Hades, in which the souls lead a sad, lethargic, comfortless existence; knowing nothing of those who were dear to them on earth, mourning only over their own condition.‡

But later Judaism is full of the strongest faith in a future life. Tradition revels in the descriptions of the abodes of bliss, or of the horrors of the

* Comp. Alger, Hist. of the Doctrine of a Future Life, p. 157; also Milman's Christianity, vol. i. pp. 21, 25, 75, &c.

† Ps. vi. 5.

‡ Job xiv. 22. Comp. Dollinger, vol. ii. p. 389; and Alger, Hist. of the Doctrine of a Future Life, pp. 151, 152, et seq.

damned.* Zoroastrianism thus acted on the Hebraic race in a double way. It not only developed in them a purer and more spiritual conception of a future existence, but later Mago-Zoroastrianism strongly coloured the Rabbinical beliefs with materialistic ideas of punishments and rewards hereafter.†

It was, however, among the Aryan nations of the East that the doctrine of a future life after visible death, was distinctly and vividly recognised. In one branch of the Aryan family it took the shape either of an eternal metempsychosis, a ceaseless whirl of births and deaths; or of utter absorption after a prolonged probation in Absolute Infinity or endless, unfathomable Space or Nothing.‡ In the other branch, this doctrine was clothed in the shape of a graduated scale of rewards and punishments, in the sense in which human accountability is understood by the modern Christian or Moslem. Whether the Zoroastrians from the beginning believed in a corporeal resurrection, is a question on

* See Milman, Hist. of Christianity, vol. i. p. 242, notes.

† See the beautiful chapter of Alger, tracing the influence of the Persian system on later Judaism, pp. 165, et seq.

‡ And yet the Brahminical priests painted the horrors of hell and the pleasures of heaven with the vividness of a thoroughly morbid imagination; but probably these descriptions were intended for the masses, whilst the philosophical part was reserved for themselves. The Arabic scholar is referred to the exceedingly appreciative account of the Buddhistic doctrines (not so much regarding future life, as generally) in Shahrastâni, p. 416.

which scholars are divided. Dollinger, with Burnouf and others, believes that this notion was not really Zoroastric; and that it is of later growth, if not derived from the Hebrews.*

However this be, about the time of the Prophet of Arabia the Persians had a strong and developed conception of future life. The remains of the Zend-Avesta which have come down to us expressly recognise a belief in future rewards and punishments. The Zoroastrianism of the Vendidad and the Bundehesh, enlarging upon the beliefs of the Avesta, holds that after a man's death the demons take possession of his body, yet on the third day consciousness returns. Souls that in their lifetime have yielded to the seductions of evil cannot pass the terrible bridge Chinevad, to which they are conducted on the day following the third night after their death. The good successfully pass it, conducted by the Yazatas (in modern Persian, Ized); and, entering the realms of bliss, join Ormuzd and the Amshaspands in their abode where, seated on thrones of gold, they enjoy the society of beautiful fairies (Hoorân-i-Bihisht), and all manner of delights. The

* Alger has furnished us with strong reasons for supposing that the early Zoroastrians believed in a bodily resurrection. The extreme repugnance with which the Mago-Zoroastrians regarded corpses, is no reason for discarding this conclusion; as most probably this repugnance arose under Manichean influences. See Alger, p. 138, et seq. Apropos of the repugnance with which the Persians in Mohammed's time looked upon corpses, consult Dollinger, vol. ii. p. 409.

wicked fall over the bridge or are dragged down into the gulf of Duzakh where they are tormented by the Daevas. The duration of this punishment is fixed by Ormúzd, and some are redeemed by the prayers and intercessions of their friends. Towards the end of the world a Prophet is to arise who is to rid the earth of injustice and wickedness, and usher in a reign of happiness.* After this a universal resurrection will take place, and friends and relatives will meet again. After the joys of recognition there will follow a separation of the good from the bad. The torments of the unrighteous will be fearful. Ahriman will run up and down Chinevad overwhelmed with anguish. A blazing comet falling on the earth, will ignite the world. Mountains will melt and flow together like liquid metal. All mankind, good and bad alike, will pass through this glowing flood, and come out purified. Even Ahriman will be changed, and the Duzakh purified. Evil thenceforth will be annihilated; and all mankind will live in the enjoyment of ineffable delights.

Such is the summary, as given by the great scholars of the East and the West, of a religion which has influenced the Semitic Faiths in an unmistake-

* Shahrastânî calls this prophet Ushîderbekâ (Cureton's Ed. p. 187), but according to Western authors his name is said to be Sosiosch, who is to be preceded by two other prophets, called Oscheder Bami and Oschèdermah (Dollinger, vol. ii. p. 401). De Sacy calls him Pashoutan, (Sur Div. Ant. de la Perse, p. 95.)

able manner, and especially the eclectic faith of Mohammed.

About the time when Jesus of Nazareth made his appearance, the Phœnicians and Assyrians had passed away. The Hellenised Roman ruled the world, checked in the East, however, by triumphant and revived Mago-Zoroastrianism.

The Jew had lost his independence for ever. A miserable sycophant occupied the throne of David. A mightier power than that of the Seleucidæ kept in subjection his spirit of unruliness. Like every nation animated by a fierce love of their country, creed and individuality, the Jews, as their fate grew darker and darker, became more and more inspired with the hope that some Heaven-commissioned ministrant, like Gideon or Maccabeus, would restore their original glory, and enable them to plant their foot on the necks of their many oppressors.* The appearance of a Messiah, portrayed in vivid colours by all their patriotic Seers, the Jewish Bards, was founded on one grand aspiration—the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. Under the influences of the Mago-Zoroastrians in the East, and the Grecian schools of philosophy in the West, among some classes of society (especially among those whom the hellenising tendencies of Herod had withdrawn from

* It is not necessary, as Alger supposes, that because the Jews looked forward to the reappearance of Elijah or some other prophet among them for these national purposes, we must conclude that they believed in transmigration.

the bosom of Israel,)—the belief in a personal Messiah was either faint and indistinct, or a mere echo from the vulgar masses. But, as Milman beautifully observes, the Palestinian Jews had about this time moulded out of various elements, a splendid though confused vision of the appearance of the Messiah, the simultaneous regeneration of all things, the resurrection of the dead, and the reign of Messiah upon earth. All these events were to take place at once, or to follow close upon each other.* The Messiah was to descend from the line of David; he was to assemble all the scattered descendants of the tribes, and to expel and destroy their hateful alien enemies. Under the Messiah, a resurrection would take place, but would be confined to the righteous of their race.† Amidst all this enthusiasm and these vague aspirations, the hopes of eternal life and future bliss were strangely mingled. The extremes of despair, and enthusiastic expectation of external relief, always tend to the development of such a state of mind among the people. One section appears to look forward to an unearthly kingdom, a reign of peace and law under divine agency, as an escape from the galling yoke of brute force; the other looks forward to the same or cognate means for securing the kingdom of heaven by the blood of aliens and heathens.‡

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. i. p. 76.

† See note I. to this chapter, chap. xvi.

‡ Like the modern, though obscure sect of the Christadelphians among the Christians.

The Messianic prophecies commence with the calamities of the Jews. All prophecies of a Deliverer have a similar origin. And all such prophecies end, or, as we ought perhaps to say, are fulfilled in some Person who accomplishes the duty Providence appears to impose upon him, according to the dictates of his conscience; but departs more or less from the vague predictions held out to the masses in the outpourings of loyal hearts, grieving over the moral and social ruin of their people, and which are cherished by the latter as the only source of consolation under degradation and despair.

Thus Jesus made his appearance.

The traditions which record the sayings of Jesus have gone through such a process of elimination and selection, that it is hardly possible at the present moment to say which are really his own words and which are not.* But taking them as they stand, and on the same footing as we regard other religious documents (without ignoring their real spirit, yet without trying to find mysterious meanings like the faithful believer), we see that throughout these traditional records, the notion of an immediate advent of a new order of things—"of a kingdom of heaven" is so predominant in the mind of Jesus as to overshadow all other ideas. The Son of Man has appeared; the Kingdom of God is at hand; such

* See note II to this chapter, chap. xvi.

is the theme of every hopeful word.* This kingdom was to replace the society and government which the Prophet of Nazareth found so imperfect and evil. At times, his words led the disciples to conclude that the new Teacher was born to lead only the poor and the famished to glory and happiness; that, under the hoped-for theocratic régime these alone would be the blessed, and would constitute the predominating element; for "woe" is denounced in awful terms against the rich and the well-fed.† At other times, the realm of God is understood to mean the literal fulfilment of the apocalyptic visions or dreams connected with the appearance of the Messiah. Sometimes, however, the kingdom of God is a realm of souls, and the approaching deliverance is merely a spiritual deliverance from the bondage of this mundane existence. All these conceptions appear at one period to have existed in the mind of Jesus simultaneously.‡ But the fierceness and bigotry of the dominant party and the power of the Roman eagle made any immediate social change impossible. As every hope of present

* Matt. iv. 17; x. 7, etc.

† Luke vii. 20, et seq. In Matthew, "the poor in spirit" are mentioned. But the simpler statement of Luke, as has been so well pointed out, seems more authentic from the fact that the heartless epicureanism of the upper classes must have naturally estranged the pitiful heart of Jesus from them.

‡ Renan, Vie de Jesus, p. 282.

amelioration died away, hopes and aspirations of a brighter future took possession of the heart. Jesus felt the present state could not last long; that the time of the regeneration of mankind was at hand;* when he himself would appear in the clouds of heaven, clothed in divine garments, seated on a throne, surrounded by angels and his chosen disciples.† The dead would rise from their graves:‡ and the Messiah would sit in judgment. The angels would be the executors of his sentence. He would send the elect to a delicious abode prepared from the beginning of the world, and the unrighteous into "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his "angels,"§ where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The chosen, not numerically large,‖ would be taken into an illuminated mansion, where they will partake of banquets presided over by the father of the race of Israel, the patriarchs and the Prophets,¶ and in which Jesus himself will share.**

* Matt. xix. 18.

† Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 30-31; xxv. 31, et seq., etc.

‡ Rev. xx. 12, 13. Comp. these notions with the Zoroastrian belief.

§ Matt. xxv. 41. ‖ Luke xiii. 23.

¶ Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiii. 28; xxii. 30.

** Matt. xxvi. 29. Later traditionists however enlarge upon these descriptions of paradise and hell, and revel in the most gorgeous fantasies, which go under the name of revelations, though perhaps they may not be recognised by some sections of Christians. Vid. Revel. xxi. 8-21; xxii. 2-3. In puerility even, the Christian traditionists do not fall short of the followers of other creeds; for instance the

That the inauguration of the new régime with the second advent of Jesus and the resurrection of the human race was considered not to be distant is apparent from the words of the noble Prophet himself, when he impresses upon his hearers the approach of the kingdom of God, and the utter futility of every provision for the occupations and exigencies of the present life.*

The words of the Teacher, acting in unison with the state of mind engendered by the circumstances of the age,† had sunk deep into the hearts of his disciples; and all looked forward with a vividness of expectation hardly surpassed in the annals of human beliefs, to the literal fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the millennium.

"If the first generation of the Christians had a "profound and constant belief, it was that the "world was approaching its end, and that the great "'revelation' of Christ was to happen soon."‡ It is only when the Christian church becomes a regular organisation that the followers of Jesus expand

tradition handed down by Irenæus, on the authority of John, concerning Jesus and the miraculous nature of the fruits of paradise. (Adv. Hær. v. 33, 3—) Also quoted by Sale, Prel. Discourse, p. 101.

* Matt. x. 23; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xiii. 35; Matt. vi. 25-34; viii. 22.

† Mark the bitter term which Jesus applies to his generation.

‡ Renan, Vie de Jesus, p. 287. Comp. also Milman's Hist. of Christianity, vol. i. p. 378.

their views beyond the restricted horizon of the Judaic world, and forgetting their millenarian dream they pass into the Greek and Roman system, and extend the empire of their creed over untold legions of barbarians fresh from their forests, who looked upon Jesus and his mother as the counterparts of their own Odin and Freya worshipped in their primeval homes.

But ever and anon, the Christian world has been agitated in moments of convulsions and disasters by the millenary excitement and a fierce expectation of the apocalyptic appearance of the great Prophet of Nazareth. The idea, however, of the realm of God has, with the lapse of ages and progress of thought, taken either a spiritual shape or utterly faded away from the mind; or, where it has been retained, derives its character from the surroundings of the individual believer.*

Such was the state of belief with regard to a future existence among the various religionists of the earth prior to the teachings of Mohammed.

The chief and predominating idea in Islâm respecting a future life is founded upon the belief that, in a state of existence hereafter, every human being will have to render an account of his or her actions on earth, and that the happiness or misery of indi-

* In my long intercourse with cultivated Christians, I have only met with four or five persons who yet anxiously looked forward to the sudden appearance of the judging Messiah.

viduals will depend upon the manner in which they have performed the behests of their Creator. His mercy and grace is nevertheless unbounded and will be bestowed alike upon His creatures. This is the pivot on which the whole doctrine of future life in Islâm turns; and this is the only doctrinal point one is required to believe and accept. All the other elements—whether evolved from the genius and intuition of the inspired Teacher or caught up and syncretised from the floating traditions of the races and peoples of his time—all these other elements, whatever their ultimate significance, are mere accessories. Setting aside from our consideration the question of subjectivity involved in all ideas of future rewards and punishments, we may say, in all ideas of a life after death, we must bear in mind that these ideas have furnished to the moral teachers of the world, the most powerful instrument for influencing the conduct of individuals and nations. But though every religion, more or less, contains the germ of this principle of future accountability in another state, all have failed to realise thoroughly its nature as a continuous agency for the elevation of the masses. Virtue for its own sake, can only be grasped by minds of superior development;—for the average intellect, and for the uneducated, sanctions more or less comprehensible will always be necessary.

To turn now to the nature of these sanctions—it

must be remembered that it is scarcely ever possible to convey an idea of spiritual pleasure or spiritual pain to the apprehensions of the generality of mankind without clothing the expressions in the garb of tangible personalities or introducing sensible objects into the description of such pleasure or pain. Philosophy has wrangled over abstract expressions undressed in tangible phraseology. Such expressions and conceptions have seen their day; have flourished and have died without making themselves felt beyond a small restricted circle of dreamers, who lived in the indefinable vagueness of their own thoughts.

Mohammed was addressing himself not only to the advanced minds of a few idealistic thinkers who happened to be then living, but to the wide world around him engrossed in materialism of every type. He had to adapt himself to the comprehensions of all. To the wild famished Arab, what more grateful or what more consonant to his ideas of paradise, than rivers of unsullied incorruptible water, or of milk and honey;* or anything more acceptable than unbounded fruits, luxuriant vegetation, inexhaustible fertility? He could conceive of no bliss

* Compare the curious anecdote of the Irâbî (Bedouin Arab) who hearing of the munificence of Abdallah-al-Mamûn, and by chance discovering a well of rain-water, and concluding by its taste, so different from the brackish water of the desert, that it came from paradise brought a quantity of it to Mamûn.

unaccompanied with these sensuous pleasures. This is the contention of that portion of the Mohammedan world which, like Sannâï and Ghazzâlî, holds that behind the descriptions of material happiness portrayed in objects like trees, rivers and beautiful mansions with fairy attendants, lies a deeper meaning; and that the joy of joys is to consist in the beatific visions of the soul in the presence of the Almighty, when the veil which divides man from his Creator will be rent, and heavenly glory revealed to the mind untrammelled by its corporeal, earthly habiliments. In this, they are upheld by the words of the Koran as well as the authentic sayings of the Prophet:—"The most favoured of God," said Mohammed, "will be he who shall see his Lord's face "(glory) night and morning, a felicity which will "surpass all the pleasures of the body as the ocean "surpasses a drop of sweat." One day talking to his friend Abû Huraira, the Prophet said, "God has pre-"pared for His good people what no eye hath seen nor "ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of any "one;" and then recited the following verse of the Koran:—"No soul knoweth the joy which is secretly "prepared for it as a reward for that it may have "wrought."* Another tradition† reports that Mohammed declared the good will enjoy beatific vision of God, to which reference, he said, is made in the

* Koran, chap. xxxii. ver. 17; Mishkât, Bk. xxiii. chap. xiii. pt. i.

† From Suhaib.

following verse of the Koran:—"And God inviteth "unto the Dwelling of Peace. . . . For those "who do good, there is excellent reward and super- "abundant addition."*

As to the parabolical nature of the Koranic expressions, this school of thinkers bases its convictions on the following passage of the inspired Book:—"It is He who hath sent down unto thee 'the "Book.' Some of the signs (verses) are firm (i.e. "perspicuous or clear to understand);—these are "the basis (or fundamental part) of the Book;— "and others are figurative."†

Another section looks upon the joys and pains of the Hereafter as entirely subjective. It holds that as extreme mental pain is far more agonising than physical pain, so is mental pleasure of the higher type far more rapturous than any sensuous pleasure; that as, after physical death, the individual Soul merges ('returns,' in the Koranic expressions) in the Universal Soul, all the joys and pains, portrayed in vivid colours by the inspired Teacher to enable the masses to grasp the truth, will be mental and subjective. This section includes within its bosom some of the greatest Sûfis or Mystics of the Moslem world.

* Koran, chap. x. ver. 27. Consult here Zamakhshrî (the Kasshâf) Egyp. ed. pt. 1, p. 244; he gives the fullest references to the opinions of the different theologians and schools, and especially mentions the doctrines of the *Mushabbahites* and the *Mujjabarites*.

† Koran, chap. iii. ver. 5.

Another, and by far the largest class, however, believe in the literal fulfilment of all the word-paintings of the Koran.

Without venturing to pass any opinion on these different notions, we may take this occasion to state our own belief with regard to the Koranic conception of future rewards and punishments.

A careful study of the Koran makes it evident that the mind of Mohammed went throngh the same process of development which marked the religious consciousness of Jesus. Mohammed and Jesus are the only two historic Teachers of the world; and for this reason we take them together. How great this development was in Jesus, is apparent not only from the idealised conception towards the end of his earthly career regarding the kingdom of heaven; but also from the change of tone towards the non-Israelites. Thoroughly exclusive at first,* with a more developed religious consciousness, wider sympathies awaken in the heart.†

As with Jesus, so with Mohammed.

The various chapters of the Koran which contain the ornate descriptions of paradise, whether figurative or literal, were delivered wholly or in part at Mecca. Probably in the infancy of his religious

* Matt. x. 5; xv. 22-26.

† Matt. xxviii. 19, &c. Comp. throughout Strauss, New Life of Jesus, (1865), vol. i. p. 296, et seq.

consciousness Mohammed himself believed in some or other of the traditions which floated around him. But with a wider awakening of the soul, a deeper communion with the Spirit of the Universe, thoughts which bore a material aspect at first became spiritualised. The mind of the Teacher progressed not only with the march of time and the development of his Religious Consciousness, but also with the progress of his disciples in apprehending spiritual conceptions. Hence, in the later *suras*, we observe a complete merging of the material in the spiritual, of the body in the soul. The gardens "watered by "rivers," perpetual shade,* plenty and harmony, so agreeable to the famished denizen of the parched, shadeless, and waterless desert, at perpetual discord with himself and all around him,—these still form the groundwork of beautiful imageries; but the happiness of the blessed is shown to consist in eternal peace and good will in the presence of their Creator.

"But those," says the Koran, "who are pious "shall dwell in gardens, amidst fountains; (they "shall say unto them) 'Enter ye therein in peace "and security'; and all rancour will we remove "from their bosoms; they shall sit as brethren, face "to face,† on couches; weariness shall not affect

* Koran, chap. xiii. ver. 34; xlvii. ver. 16, 17. Comp. also chaps. ix. x. and xiv.

† See the note by Sale to this passage.

" them therein, neither shall they be repelled thence " for ever." *

What can be nobler or grander in its conception or imagery, or give a better idea of the belief in Mohammed's mind (at least towards the latter period of his career) concerning the nature of the present and future life than the following passage :—" It is " He who enableth you to travel by land and by sea ; " so that ye go on board of ships, which sail on with " them, with favourable breeze, and they rejoice " therein. But if a tempestuous wind overtake, and " the waves come on them from every side, and they " think they are encompassed therewith, they call " on God, professing unto Him sincere religion ; " (saying) wouldst thou but rescue us from this, " then we will ever be indeed of the thankful. But " when we have rescued them, Behold ! they commit " unrighteous excesses on the earth. O men ! verily " the excesses ye commit to the injury of your own " souls, are only for the enjoyment of this earthly " life ; soon shall ye return to us, and we will declare " unto you that which ye have done. Verily, the " likeness of this present life is not otherwise than " the water which we send down from heaven, and " the productions of the earth, of which men and " cattle eat, are mixed therewith, till the earth has " received its beautiful raiment, and is decked out ;

* Koran, chap. xv. ver. 42.

" and they who inhabit it imagine they have power
" over it! (But), our behest cometh unto it by night
" or by day, and we make it as if it had been mown,
" as though it had not teemed (with fertility) only
" yesterday. Thus do we make our signs clear unto
" those who consider. And God inviteth unto the
" Abode of Peace, and guideth whom He pleaseth
" into the right way.* For those who do good is
" excellent reward and superabundant addition of it;
" neither blackness nor shame shall cover their faces.
" These are the inhabitants of paradise; therein do
" they abide for ever. But those who have wrought
" evil, shall receive the reward of evil, equal there-
" unto;† and shame shall cover them,—(for there will
" be none to protect them against God), as though
" their faces were covered with a piece of the night
" of profound darkness."‡

Then again the following passage, in its solemn grandeur, its sublime dignity and the purity of its aspirations, not to say its practical depth, is surpassed by nothing in the history of the moral world.

" Who fulfil the covenant of God, and break not
" their compact; and who join together what God

* Sale, on the authority of Baidâwî, explains the expression " whom He pleaseth," as " those who repent." (p. 67, n. i. chap. iv.) Compare Zamakhshrî (the Kasshâf).

† Observe, the reward of virtue will not be confined to an exact measure of man's works; it will far exceed his deserts; but the recompense of evil will be strictly proportioned to what one has done.

‡ Koran, chap. x. vv. 23-28.

" hath bidden to be joined; and who fear their Lord,
" and dread an ill-reckoning; and who, from a sin-
" cere desire to please their Lord,* are constant
" amid trials, and observe prayers and give alms, in
" secret and openly, out of what we have bestowed
" on them; and turn aside evil with good: for these
" is the recompense of that Abode, gardens of
" eternal habitation, into which they shall enter, to-
" gether with such as shall have acted rightly from
" among their fathers, their wives and their posterity;
" and the angels shall go in unto them by every
" portal, (saying,) 'Peace be with you! because ye
" have endured with patience.' Excellent is the re-
" ward in that Abode!"†

Enough has been said to show the utter falsehood of the theory that Mohammed's pictures of future life were all sensuous. We will now conclude this chapter with the following passage from the Koran, to show the depth of spirituality in Islâm, and the purity of the hopes and aspirations on which it bases its rule of life:—" O thou soul which art at rest, re-
" turn unto thy Lord, pleased and pleasing Him;
" enter thou among my servants; and enter thou
" my garden of felicity."‡

* This may also be translated as "from a desire to see the face (Glory) of their Lord."

† Koran, chap. xiii. vv. 20-24. Compare throughout Zamakhshrî (the Kasshâf).

‡ Koran, chap. lxxxix. vv. 27-30.

NOTE I. TO CHAPTER XVI.

The similarity between the Zoroastrian idea of a Deliverer and Restorer of religion and order on earth, and the Messianic conception among the Jews is, to say the least, wonderful. The Jews, it is certain, derived this conception from the Zoroastrians; and in their misfortunes developed it in more vivid terms. But I am strongly disposed to think that the idea of a Sosiosch, whatever its prophetic significance, arose among the Persians also, when labouring under a foreign yoke—whether of the Semitic Assyrians or the Greek Macedonians, it is difficult to say. The very country in which the scene of his appearance is laid, Kanguédez in Khorasan according to De Sacy—Cansoya according to Dollinger's authorities, show that the Persians, in their misfortunes, looked to the East, especially to the 'Land of the Sun' for assistance and deliverance.

NOTE II. TO CHAPTER XVI.

Milman himself admits that the traditions regarding the acts and sayings of Jesus, which were floating about among the Christian communities, were not cast into their present shape till almost the close of the first half of the second century. (History of Christianity, vol. i. p. 126). Necessarily, therefore, the ancient collectors and modellers of the Christian Gospels, or as Milman regards them, rude and simple historians, must have exercised a discretionary latitude in the reception of the traditions. They must have decided everything on dogmatic grounds; "if a narrative or scripture was, in its tone and substance, "agreeable to their (preconceived) views, they looked upon defective "external evidence as complete, if it was not agreeable, the most "sufficient was explained away as a misunderstanding." Hence a great many additions were made, though unconsciously, to the sayings and doings of Jesus. On this point the testimony of Celsus, with every allowance for exaggeration, must be regarded as conclusive

when he says the Christians were in the habit of coining and remodelling their traditional accounts. (Origen c. Celsus, ii. 27.) And this on the principle laid down by Sir W. Muir in Canon III. p. lxxxi. vol. i. (Life of Mahomet). This being a historic principle, must be applied to every subject-matter of history. It must be remembered, however, that, as a Mohammedan, I apply Sir W. Muir's canon to the Christians only, and not to Jesus.

CHAPTER XVII.

Up to the time of the Islâmic Dispensation, the Arab world, properly so-called, restricted within the Peninsula of Arabia and some outlying tracts to the north-west and the north-east, had showed no signs of intellectual growth. If any individual proved himself a philosopher or a scholar, he immediately passed into the ranks of those among whom learning and the arts were regarded with favour and respect, and adopting the name of Greek or Persian, he forgot his nationality.

Poetry, oratory, and judicial astrology formed the only favourite objects of pursuit among the Arabs of the peninsula. The poetical competitions at the annual meetings of Okadh; the system of government among the tribes, especially those of settled habits, half patriarchal, half representative; a strong feeling of independence and self-reliance which led to the cultivation of the art of eloquence, had combined to give a beautiful consistency to the language of the Arabs.* Poetry was the soul of their existence; and the fiery warriors of the desert

* Comp. De Slane's Transl. of Ibn-Khallican, Introd. p. 6.

were led on to victory and vengeance by the songs of their women.

The persecutions by the Christian emperors of Byzantium, which drove so many Pagan and heretic philosophers into Persia, brought some stray waifs also into Arabia,* but little or no influence was exercised by these new comers on the Arab mind. In twenty years' time however, through the influence of Mohammed, the whole scene was transformed as by a miracle, and all the varied warring elements, which had divided clan against clan, were joined together and welded firmly.

Raised from the darkest abyss of barbarism, inspired with a firm belief in the Hereafter, which made all look on the present as a preparation for the future, they paid implicit obedience to that wondrous man who had worked this marvellous change in their destiny. Nothing better exemplifies the character of those twenty years, or the spirit of freedom preserved in the teachings of Islâm than the following tradition:—Mohammed whilst deputing Sâd-ibn-Muâdh as a delegate to some tribe, asked him how he would judge between contending parties if they came to him for a decision. Sâd replied, "First I will look to the Koran, then to precedents "of the Prophet, and lastly rely upon my own "judgment."†

* Comp. Oelsner, Des Effets de la Religion de Mohammed, p. 110.

† Shahrastânî.

It was "an age of active principles" which Mohammed ushered in. The ancient world, as represented by the Greeks of the seventh century, had talked about the divine and the human nature until they had lost all faith in God or man.* The Byzantine, who represented the culture of the world at the time of Mohammed, had utterly dissociated practice from speculation. The tendency of the Greek is always to dissever speculation from practice. The nature of Christ was more important to him than the practice of those virtues which he had inculcated. Mohammed proclaimed an actual, a real God to men who were disputing concerning His nature and His attributes. "Nothing could have "raised," says the late Professor Maurice, "the "Byzantine Christianity out of the abyss into which "it had fallen, but such a voice as that which came "from the Arabian cave. That voice proclaimed "the Eternal Truth which Greeks were disbelieving. "It presented that Truth in the only form in which "it could have been practical."†

The grand central figure of Mohammed rises before our view, clothed in all the majesty of prophetic greatness. King, chief, magistrate, and spiritual guide, he rules the heart of men with his heaven-inspired genius. Men gather from all quarters of the globe to listen to his wonderful words,

* Maurice, Mediæval Philosophy, p. 31.

† Ibid. p. 31.

which breathe energy and force and infuse new life into the dormant heart of Humanity. It was an age of earnestness and faith, marked by the uprise of the Soul against the domination of aimless, lifeless philosophy. It proved the utter futility of inane talk when in collision with active principles.

The age of speculation however was to commence soon; its germs were contained in the positive precepts of the Master,* and even whilst he was working, the scholarly disciple was thinking and spiritualising. The Master had himself declared that whoever desired to realise† the spirit of his teachings must listen to the words of the Disciple. Who more able to listen to the sweet, calm words of gentle instruction than Ali, the beloved friend, the trusted disciple, the devoted brother and son. The gentle calm teachings instilled in early life into the young mind bore their fruit.

The caliphates of Abû-Bakr and Omar were marked only by severe struggles at home and abroad, for the preservation or for the consolidation of the commonwealth. The weak and vacillating government of Othman was too short and distracted to

* The appeal which is made to the rational faculties of man, to prove the existence of the Creator, requires an exercise of judgment and reason to grasp.

† The Persian poet has thus expressed this tradition :—"Ke man "shahr ilm-am Ali-am dar ast, Durust în sakhun kaul Pyghamber "ast."

allow time for the energies awakened by Islâm to calm down. On Othman's tragical death, the Scholar was called by the voice of the people to the helm of the state. During his retirement, Ali had devoted himself to the study of the Master's precepts by the light of reason. But for his assassination the Moslem world might then have witnessed the realisation of the Prophet's teachings, in the actual amalgamation of Reason with Law,* and in the impersonation of the first principles of true philosophy in positive action. The same passionate devotion to knowledge and learning which pre-eminently distinguished Mohammed from all the other moral Teachers of the world, breathed in every word of his disciple.† With a liberality of mind—far beyond that of the age in which he lived—was joined a sincere devoutness of spirit and earnestness of faith.‡ The songs, or as they have been called the litanies of Ali, stand unsurpassed in purity of diction and chasteness of expression. They also portray a devout uplooking of the heart towards the Source of all good, and an unbounded faith in Humanity.§

* Comp. Oelsner, p. 145.

† See note I. to this chapter, chap. xvii.

‡ The beautiful verses in which Ali expresses his passionate devotion for learning and knowledge, have been copiously quoted by the author of the Mustatrif.

§ These songs have been published in Europe, with a Latin translation.

The hand of an assassin dashed all these expectations to the ground. The accession of the Ommiades, through treachery and intrigue, to the office which the virtues of the *Khulafâi-rashidîn** had sanctified, was a severe blow to the progress of knowledge and liberalism in the Islâmic world. Their stormy reigns, harassed by fearful wars, left the nation little leisure to devote to the gentler pursuits of science; and to this, among the sovereigns, was joined a characteristic idolatry of the Past. During the comparatively long rule of a century, the House of Ommiyâ produced only one man devoted to the cultivation of letters; and this man was Abû Hâshem Khâlid ben Yezîd, "the philosopher of the Merwânian family," as he has been called, who was set aside from the succession on account of his learning.†

The jealous suspicion, and the untiring animosity of the children of Hind and Abû-Sufiân had obliged the descendants of the Prophet to take refuge in solitude and humble privacy.‡ "In the night of "misery and unhappiness" they followed truly and faithfully the precepts of their ancestor, and found

* The first four successors of the Prophet, Abû Bakr, Omar, Othmân and Ali, were so designated.

† Comp. Mâkhaz-i-ulûm, p. 48, 49; and Ibn-Khallicân, (De Slane's transl.) vol. i. p. 481.

‡ Abû-Sufiân was the father of Moawiyâ, the founder of the Ommiade dynasty; on the animosity of the Ommiades against the Fatimites, see Ibn-Khallicân, vol. ii. p. 217 and 218.

consolation in intellectnal pursuits, and in that introspection which distinguishes noble hearts.* Their ardent love of knowledge, their passionate devotion to the cause of humanity—(their spirit looking upwards far above the literalness of common interpretations of the Law)†—their recognition of the all-embracing Soul of the universe‡ brought into strong relief all the spirituality and expansiveness of Islâm. Their adherents, under the influence of a deep-seated feeling of hatred, were often induced to make use of their names in their own revolts against the usurping race.§ But the noblest of the Ommiades‖ recognised in the fulness of gratitude their true worth when he wished to cast his diadem at their feet.

Surrounded by men whom love, devotion and

* There is a beautiful story told of one of them, Imâm Abu-l-Hassan Ali Al-Askarî, by Ibn-Khallicân, vol. ii. p. 214 and 215.

† Comp. Ibn-Khallicân, vol. ii. p. 212, and the 1st Khutbà of the Nahj-ul-Balaghât, and the traditions on knowledge in vol. xiv. of the Bahâr-ul-Anwâr of Mulla Bâkir Mujlisî. Imâm Jafir-i-Sâdik thus defines science: "The enlightenment of the heart is its essence; "Truth, its principal object; Inspiration, its guide; Reason, its "accepter; God, its inspirer, and the words of man its utterer." (Târikh-ul-Hukamâ).

‡ See the Hadîs-i.Ahlilaj, from Imâm Ali Musî ar Reza, reported by Moffuzzil-bîn-Omar Joufî, Bahâr-ul-Anwâr.

§ For this unconscious use of their names in revolts and risings against the house of Ommiya, or of Abbas, Sir W. Muir pronounces a bitter and undeserved sentence against the Fatimites, vol. i. Introd. xl. note.

‖ Omar-ibn Abd-ul-Azîz

sympathy with their patience, had gathered round them, they were naturally influenced in a greater or less degree by the varied ideas of their followers. Yet their philosophy never sinks to that war of words without life and without earnestness, which characterised the schools of Athens, of Alexandria, or of Bagdad under the later Abbassides.

With the rise of the house of Abbas,* another era commences. Its members had drunk at the same fountain-head with the children of Fatimâ, and the lessons they had learnt in the common school of affliction, did not lose efficacy when they attained the caliphate. Abu-l-Abbâs Saffâh (the Relentless) was as remarkable for his devotion to letters as for his warlike qualities. Mansûr, Hâdî and Mehdî were not only warm patrons of the learned who flocked to their courts from all parts of the world, but were themselves assiduous cultivators of every branch of knowledge.

Particular epochs in the history of the world always stand out as the brightest portions of a nation's life. Athens had her Periclean age; Rome her Augustan era; so too had the Islâmic world her period of glory; and we may with justice look upon the reigns of Hârûn and Abdullah al-Mâmûn as an epoch of equal, if not of superior greatness and magnificence. Under these two caliphs, the Moslems

* Abbâs was the uncle of the Prophet (see ante p. 60) from whom this family derived its designation of Abbassides.

come distinctly before the world to fulfil the high purpose for which Providence has designed them. The Saracenic race, by their elastic genius as well as by their central position—with the hoarded treasures of dying Greece and Rome on one side and of Persia on the other—and India and China far away sleeping the sleep of ages—were pre-eminently fitted to become the teachers of humanity. Under the inspiring influences of the great Prophet, who gave them a code and a nationality, and assisted by their sovereigns, the Saracens caught up the lessons of wisdom from the East and the West, combined them with the teachings of the Master and "started from soldiers into scholars."

Under the Ommiades, we see the Moslems passing through a period of probation to prepare them for the glorious task they were called upon to undertake. Under the Abbassides we see in them the repositaries of the knowledge of the world. Every part of the globe is ransacked by the agents of the Caliphs for the hoarded literary treasures of antiquity; these are brought to the capital, "the garden of justice," and laid open before an admiring and appreciating public. Schools and academies spring up on every side; the great philosophers of the ancient world are studied along with the Koran. Galen, Dioscorides, Themistius, Aristotle, Plato are reverenced—even more than they ever were among their own people. The sovereigns themselves assist

in literary meetings and philosophical disquisitions. For the first time in the history of humanity, a religious and autocratic government is observed to ally itself with philosophy, preparing and partaking in its triumphs.*

Every city in the empire sought to outrival the other in the cultivation of the arts and sciences. Every governor and provincial chief tried to emulate the sovereign. From every part of the globe students and scholars flocked to Cordova, to Bagdad, and to Cairo, to listen to the words of the Saracenic sages. Men who became in after life the heads of the Christian Church, drank at the fountain of Mohammed.† And when the house of Abbâs lost its hold on the Empire of the East, the chiefs who sprang up to occupy their place, endeavoured to rival the Caliphs in their patronage of science and learning. The Buyide, the Samanide, the Ghaznavide in the East, the Fatimite and the Ayubite in the West, the Moorish sovereigns in Spain, outvied each other in the cultivation of arts and letters. From the shores of the Atlantic eastward to the Indian Ocean, far away even to the Pacific, resounded the voice of Philosophy and Learning, under Moslem guidance and Moslem inspiration.‡ This glorious period lasted till the close of

* An observation of M. Oelsner, p. 137.

† Like Gerbert afterwards Pope Sylvester II.

‡ The Biographical Dictionaries of Ibn-Koteiba (Kitâb-al-

the 15th and the commencement of the 16th century of the Christian era. Then forgetting the precepts of the Master, the Moslems sank to the level of the barbarous hordes who flooded Moslem Asia, and the polytheistic races of conquered lands, and thus adopted a hardness of heart, a literalness of faith, and an abject superstitious turn of mind, entirely contrary to the teachings of Mohammed.

The high position assigned by the Prophet to science and philosophy, and the devotion of his early descendants to every branch of intellectual pursuit—had led to the rapid development of intellectual liberty among the Moslems.

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Koran is the curious, and to a superficial observer inconsistent manner, in which it combines the existence of a Divine Will—(which not only orders all things, but which acts directly upon men and addresses itself to the springs of thought in them)—with the assertion of a Free Agency in man and the liberty of intellect. It seems inconsistent at first sight that man should be judged by his works—a doctrine which forms the foundation of Islâmic morality—if all his actions are ruled by an all-powerful Will. The earnest faith of Mohammed in an active, ever-living Principle, joined to his trust in

Maârif), of Ibn Khallicân and of Nowayri, and the Bibliographical Lexicon of Hâji Khalifa (Kashf-uz-Zunûn) prove the extreme fertility of the Moslem genius.

the progress of man, supplies a key to this mystery. To Mohammed the fundamental laws of Truth and Nature, which seem innate in the moral Consciousness of Humanity—are the essence of Divine ordinances. They are as much laws, in the strictest sense of the word, as the laws which regulate the movements of the celestial bodies. But the will of God is not an arbitary will; it is an educating will, to be as humbly obeyed by the scholar in his walks of learning, as by the devotee in his cell. One hour's contemplation of the works of the Creator, one hour's conscientious study of the principles which regulate the phenomena of the creation, is more acceptable to God than seventy years of devotion and prayer.*

The latitude of private judgment Islâm allowed its followers took varied shape at different times and in different individuals.

The divisions in the Church of Mohammed, which pass under the name of schisms, have originated almost exclusively from political causes and tribal or clan-jealousies,† though of course some degree of religious rancour added bitterness to the feelings of partizanship.

The Moslem doctors, as fond of dogmatising and

* Târîkh-ul-Hukamâ. Comp. the 1st Khutba of the Nahj-ul-Balâghat.

† These divisions have been traced by Shahrastânî with his usual particularity, (Curcton's Ed.) p. 10-12.

as wedded to the Past as their rival brothers of the West, have from the earliest times divided the dogmas of their religion into fundamental and non-fundamental.* The former include the points of faith which the believer is bound to accept, such as belief in the existence of a Deity, a sense of future accountability, etc.; the latter specify the duties which emanate from such beliefs. These fundamental dogmas—perhaps properly so called, as they furnish the chief basis for the construction of every system of positive morality,—were early dissociated from true philosophy and relegated to the domains of dogmatic theology; they now furnished the principal battle-ground for the revived Rationalism in Islâm. One section held, that all these fundamental points of faith were as much within the cognizance of Reason as the duties arising from them; another as strongly asserted that its province was confined to the non-fundamental points,† whilst others held intermediate notions.

On the question of free-will and predestination, three men, named Mâbad al Johni, Gîlân of Damascus, and Eunas al Aswâri had already broken away from the traditions of the Past and acknowledged the absolute free-agency of man.‡ This *Bidat* or heresy, as the orthodox Shahrastânî calls it, was

* Usûl and Furû (lit. roots and branches).

† Shahrastânî, throughout; especially pp. 28, 29.

‡ Shahrastânî, p. 17.

occasioned by the decided predestinarianism of Jahm ben Safwân,* who in the absolute denial of free-will to man almost rivalled Calvin, and whose opinions found much favour with the moody bigots who occupied the office of Caliphs. Immediately after came Wâsil ben Atâ, a disciple of Imâm Hassan al-Basri (of Bassora).† The master himself was educated in the school of the early descendants of the Prophet, "philosophers of the "family of Mohammed," as they have been so nobly designated,‡ and the liberality of his views was naturally in remarkable contrast to those of his age. Wâsil had imbibed knowledge from the same source;§ but he soon separated from Hassan on a question of religious dogma, which shewed his impulsive nature, and founded a school of his own.‖ His disciples have from this time been called *Mutazala*, Separatists or Seceders.¶ He soon formulated the principles which constituted the bases of his difference from the other existing schools. His impulsiveness often led him, like Luther, to overstep

* Comp. Munk, Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe, p. 310.

† Wâsil was born in the year 80 of the Hejira (699-700 A.C.), and died 131 A.H. (748-749); Comp. Munk, p. 311.

‡ Mâkhaz-i-ulûm (Eng. Transl.) p. 39.

§ On the opinions entertained by the early Fatimites, who most probably reflected the belief of Mohammed and Ali, the tradition reported by Eûnas ben Ektîn, in the chapter on Providence and Free-will of the Bahâr-ul-Anwâr, throws considerable light.

‖ Shahrastânî, pp. 17 and 31. ¶ Ibid. 29 and 30.

the bounds of reason in his antagonism against intellectual tyranny; yet the general rationalism which distinguished his school from every other brought the strongest and most liberal minds to his side.* Under their influence, the principles of logic and philosophy were brought to bear on the precepts of religion, thus giving rise to an especial science—the science of theological philosophy.†

"The Mutazalas unanimously hold," says Shahrastânî, "that God is Eternal; and that Eternity "is the peculiar property of His essence; but they "deny the existence of any eternal attributes (as dis- "tinct from His nature). For they say, He is "omniscient as to His nature; Living as to His "nature; Almighty as to His nature; but not through "any knowledge, power or life existing in Him as "eternal attributes; for knowledge, power and life

* Abu'l-Hassan Ali *al Musoudi*, (the author of the *Marawej-udh-Dheheb*, Fields of Gold), "Imâm, historian, and doctor," was a Mutazala. The author of the Habîb-us-Siyar is said to have belonged to the same school.

† Ilm-ul-Kalâm. Shahrastânî, p. 18; Munk, pp. 311, 312, 320, 322; Renan, Averroes et l'Averroïsme, p. 79-81; Schmölders, Essai sur les Ecoles philosophiques chez les Arabes, pp. 138, 139. Prolégomènes d'Ibn-Khaldoun (De Slane's Transl.) pt. iii. p. 48. I quite agree with Gibbon that a philosophical theologian is a centaur, or as they say in the East of the fabulous bird, *unkâ*, a being "*Mâlûm-ul-ism, majhûl uj-jism*," name known but existence not;" yet I think a system of philosophy may exist which should combine philosophy and the true principles of religion without any incongruity.

" are part of His essence. Otherwise, if they are to " be looked upon as eternal attributes of the Deity, " it will give rise to a multiplicity of eternal " entities."*

" They maintain that the knowledge of God is as " much within the province of Reason as that of any " other Entity;† that He cannot be beheld with the " corporeal sight; and with the exception of Him- " self everything else is liable to change or to suffer " extinction. They also maintain that Justice is the " animating principle of human actions; Justice " according to them being the dictates of Reason and " the concordance of the ultimate results of the con- " duct of man with such dictates. Again, they hold " that there is no eternal law as regards human " actions; that the divine ordinances which regulate " the conduct of men are the results of growth and " development; that God has commanded and for- " bidden, promised or threatened by a law which " grew gradually. At the same time they say, that " he who works righteousness merits rewards, and

* Shahrastânî, p. 30. These fine metaphysical distinctions, however absurd they may seem to us, especially as they look like meddling with what the human mind cannot grasp, we must remember were directed against the Christian, who, in his bewilderment to reconcile the various " Natures " he had conjured up, was obliged to have recourse to the assertion of three Persons in the Godhead, and also against the anthropomorphic Moslems who ascribed every quality they found in themselves to God.

† Shahrastânî throughout.

" he who works evil deserves punishment; and this, " they say, is consonant with reason.* The Muta- " zalas also say that all knowledge is attained " through reason, and must necessarily be so ob- " tained. They hold that the cognition of good and " evil is also within the province of reason; that no- " thing is known to be wrong or right until reason " has enlightened us as to the distinction; and that " thankfulness for the blessings of the Benefactor is " made obligatory by Reason, even before the pro- " mulgation of any law on the subject."*

The Mutazalas unanimously maintain that man has perfect freedom; is the author of his actions both good and evil, and deserves reward and punishment hereafter accordingly.†

The Sifâtiyâs (the Attributists) who represent the old patristic notions in the most stereotyped form, are the direct antitheses of the Mutazalas. The Ashâriyâs (an offshoot of the Sifatite schools, followers of Abu-l-Hassan Ali-al-Ashârî), with slight variations uphold the doctrines of the parent stock; maintaining that God possesses eternal attributes, that we cannot arrive at the knowledge of His existence by Reason; that Reason cannot enable us to distinguish right from wrong; that the Divine ordinances are eternal; that God can be beheld; and that man has power

* Shahrastânî.

† Ibid. p. 29; Munk, Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe, pp. 311, 326, 327.

over his evil deeds alone, all good actions coming from God.* The Jabariyâs, however, deny every freedom to man, holding that all human actions are the result of Divine will.†

Against these anthropomorphic doctrines, as the Mutazalas with truth designated them, their efforts were mainly directed; and naturally they called themselves the upholders of the unity and justice of God.‡ The Mutazalas are thus, decided Rationalists, on account of the great predominance they allow to Reason, in every question regarding the progress of man; they are Utilitarians, in adopting the doctrine of general usefulness and the promotion of the happiness of the many, as the criterion of right and wrong; they are Evolutionists, in regarding every law that regulates the mutual relations of

* Shahrastânî, p. 66; Munk, Mélanges de Phil. Juive et Arabe, pp. 324-326.

† It is curious that all these sects base the truth of their arguments on the Koran and the Ahâdîs (plr. of Hadîs, traditions). But it is probable that the moderate Mutazalas represented the views of Ali and the most liberal and learned of his early descendants, if not of Mohammed himself. The doctrines of the Fatimites have a curious and a most wonderful analogy, in many points, to those of the Mutazalas. Compare the 1st Khutbâ of the Nahj-ul-Balâghat, the chapter on Freewill and Providence, in the Bahâr-ul-Anwâr, and other traditions (ahâdîs) in the same work on "the bases of knowledge." It is well-known that the chief doctors of the Mutazalite school were educated under the Fatimites.

‡ Ashâb-ul-Adl wat-tauhîd; Shahrastânî, pp. 29, 30, et seq.; Munk, p. 311.

human beings, as the result and product of a process of development. In their ideas of the long antiquity of man on earth, they occupy a vantage ground in relation to the natural philosophers of the modern world.* That grand collection of Mutazalite ideas —which passes under the name of *Tuhfat-ul-Akhwân-us-Safâ*,—"Gifts of the Brothers of Purity," —in the purity of its sentiments, its fervent love of humanity, its earnest faith in the progress of man, and in its universal charity embracing even the brute creation in its fold, is a masterpiece of its kind.†

Their doctrines were adopted by Abdullah-al-Mâmûn, the grandest and most liberal-minded of the Saracenic sovereigns, and one of the most far-seeing monarchs of any age. The aim of his life, and also of that of his two successors, Motassem and Vâthek, was to infuse this rationalistic spirit which animated them and a portion of their subjects, into the whole Moslem world. Unfortunately for Islâm it was found, as a Western historian remarks,‡ that the Jurists of Bagdad were more powerful than the Caliphs; and the triumph of patristicism under Mu-

* They derived this notion from a Hadîs reported from Ali, Bahâr-ul-Anwâr, chapter on Creation.

† Compare Munk, p. 329.

‡ Sédillot, Hist. des Arabes, p. 187. Comp. also Oelsner, des Effets de la Religion de Mohammed, and von Hammer, Galerie biographique des souverains Mahométans.

tawwakil, was one of the chief causes of the downfall of the Caliphate.

Generally, the Shiâs tend towards the Mutazalite doctrines; the Sunnites towards those of the Sifâtiyâs, but the extremes, as everywhere, merge into each other.

The Shiâs of the moderate Mutazalite school are divided into the Usûlî and the Akhbârî, namely (1) those who adhere to certain principles of interpretation as laid down by the Mujtahids (heads of the schools), whilst repudiating all traditions not received from certain established and recognised sources; and (2) those who deny entirely the influence of authority on matters of opinion (except in so far as it may tend to direct individual judgment into a healthy channel.)*

The Sunnites are divided by Shahrastânî into the *Ahl-ul-hadîs*, "people of tradition;" and the *Ahl-ur-Rai*, "people of reason or judgment." The Shâfeites, the Mâlekites, and the Hanbalites have been classed in the former, the Hanêfites in the latter

* M. Gobineau (les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale, p. 28) on the authority of his Persian informants (Moslems) divides the Shiites into three classes:—(1) The Mujtahidy, (2) the Sheikhy, and (3) the Akhbary; and the definitions he gives of each of them leads me to suppose that the class I call *Usûlî* were in his time, in Persia, subdivided into two classes, (1) and (2). In India and even in Persia, at the present moment, there exist only the two subdivisions mentioned in the text. In the definitions, too, M. Gobineau and myself differ a little.

division. These schools take their name from four great jurisconsults of the (Sunnite) Moslem world.* The Shâfeites, the Mâlekites, and the Hanbalites are strict Sifâtiyâs and exceedingly anthropomorphic in their views regarding the attributes of the Deity, and unswervingly adhere to every principle and tradition of the past. The Hanîfites, admitting the traditions, leave the interpretation to individual judgment and analogy. Thus the Shiite Akhbârî and the Sunnite Hanîfî meet on common grounds

The wonderful mysticism which forms the life and soul of modern Persian literature, owes its distinct origin to the esoteric significance attached by an important section of the Moslems to the words of the Koran. The elevated feeling of Divine Pervasion with which Mohammed often spoke; the depth of fervent and ecstatic rapture which characterised his devotion,† constituted the chief basis on which Moslem mysticism was founded. During the lifetime of the Prophet, when the performance of duties

* Abû-Hanîfa-an-Nomân ben Thabît (699-769 A.C.); Mohammed ben Idrîs as-Shafei (767-819 A.C.); Mâlek ben Ans (712-795 A.C.); and Ahmed ben Hanbal (785-854 A.C.); vid. Shahrastânî, p. 160, 161; Sédillot, Histoire des Arabes, p. 403, 404. Comp. also the note from Ibn Khaldûn, in De Slane's Transl. of Ibn Khallicân, Introd. p. xxvi.

† The traditions in the Mishkât, and the Sahîh of Bukhârî throw considerable light on the views of Mohammed regarding Divine pervasion, especially the one reported by Abû Mûsa-al-Ashâri. See also the first Khutbâ of the Nahj-ul-Balâghat.

was regarded before speculation, there was little scope for the full development of the contemplative and mystical element in Islâm.

This mystical and contemplative element has existed in all religions, and among every people. As our battles, moral aud physical, grow fewer, we look upon this character—the character of quiet contemplation—as the true type of humanity. But yet it will vary with the peculiarities of the individual and the race, and according to their tendency to confound the abstract with the concrete. The Hindu looks to the absorption of the special in the Infinite, as the culmination of happiness; and to attain this end, he remains immoveable in one spot, and resigns himself to complete apathy.* The sense of infinity makes it difficult for him to distinguish between the priest and the God, or himself and the God, objectively; and eventually between the Deity and the different forms of nature in which he is supposed to be manifested. Gradually this train of contemplation leads to the formal conclusion, as appears from the Bhagavad Gîta, that Creator and Creation are identical. We see thus how curiously pantheism approaches in its extreme manifestation to fetishism, which preceded every other idea of the Divinity. In its infancy the human mind knows no spiritual sentiment but one of unmixed terror. The

* Comp. Dozy, Het Islamisme, chapter on Sufiism.

primeval forests which the hand of man has not yet touched, the stupendous mountains looming in the distance, the darkness of the night, with the grim weird shapes which hover over it; the howlings of the wind through the forest tops, all inspire fear and awe in the infant mind of man. He worships every material object he sees more powerful or more awe-striking than himself or his immediate surroundings. Gradually he comes to attach an ideality to all these objects of Nature; and thinks these idealities worthy of adoration. In process of time all these separate idealities merge in one universal all-embracing Ideality. Fetishism is only the first step to Monotheism and Pantheism, and each of these merges into one another in their extremes. The early Zoroastrian was very little of the pantheist. Zervânism was a growth of later ages.

Neoplatonism, itself the child of Eastern thought, had impressed its character on Christianity, and probably given rise to the Eucharistic idea. With the exception of Johannes Scotus, the mystics of Europe during the middle ages fought only on this ground. Mysticism properly so-called, with its higher yearning after the Infinite, was ushered in by the Moslems, as we shall hereafter see.

The idea among the nobler minds, that there was a deeper and more inward sense in the words of the Koran, arose not from the wish to escape from the rigour of texts and dogmas, but from a profound

conviction that those words meant more, not less than the popular expounders supposed them to mean.*

This conviction, combined with a deep feeling of Divine Pervasion—a feeling originating from and in perfect accordance with the teachings of the Koran, and the instructions of the Prophet,—led to the development among the Moslems of that Contemplative or Idealistic philosophy which has received the name of Sufiism, the spread of which, among the Western Mohammedans, was probably assisted by the prevalence of Platonic ideas. The celebrated Imâm (Abû Hâmid Mohammed) al-Gazzâlî in the East, and Ibn Tufail in the West, were the two greatest representatives of Idealistic Philosophy among the Moslems. The former, dissatisfied with every philosophical system which based knowledge on experience or reason, had taken refuge in Sufiism. From that moment, the destruction of philosophers became the chief object of his life.† He directed his attacks

* This is beautifully exemplified by the following paraphrase of a part of the 1st chapter of the Koran (Sûrat-al-Fâtihâ) by Khwaja Ubeid-ullah, as given in the Tafsîr-i-Hussainî: "Guide us Thou, O "Lord, on the straight path—Guide us in the way which will "lead to Thee, and bless us with Thy love which is Thy essence, "and free us from everything which may keep us back from Thee; "direct us in the way in which we may see none but Thee, hear none "but Thee, love none but Thee."

† Compare throughout Munk, Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe, p. 366, et seq.; Renan, Averroës et l'Averroïsme, pp. 73, 133; Schmölder, Essai sur les Ecoles Philosophiques chez les Arabes, which is chiefly meant to explain the views of Gazzâlî.

chiefly against Abû Ali Ibn Sînâ (Avicenna) and his peripatetism.* Al-Gazzâlî's influence served greatly to promote the diffusion of Sufîism among the Eastern Moslems; and he has been justly called the Plato of the Mohammedans.† A noble train followed in his footsteps. Idealistic philosophy was embraced by the greatest intellects of the Mohammedan East. The Moulânâ Jelâl-ud-dîn of Rûm (Turkey), whose Masnavî is adored by the Sufî, Sanâï whom Jelâl-ud-dîn himself has called his superior,‡ Farîd-ud-dîn Attâr; Shams-ud-dîn Hâfiz; Khâkânî, the moralist Sâdî, the romancer Nizâmî,—all belonged to this school; and some of the Sufîs even lay claim to the Homer of Persia, Firdousî, as one of their school.

Their arguments, however, for thus claiming the greatest poet of Irân, and one of the greatest of the world, are based on but slender foundations.§ His mind was of a sterner type; and, as a natural consequence, the Idealism which pervades his writings is

* I use an expressive word which is now coming into general use, to signify a school of philosophy analogous to the empirical school of Aristotle.

† Nafahât-ul-Uns, &c. (Lives of the Sufis), (published in Calcutta, 1858), English Introduction, p. 17, note.

‡ "Nîm jûshî karda-am man nîm-khâm, az Hakîm-i-Ghaznawî (Sanâï) bishnou tamâm." Of Attâr, again, he speaks thus: "Attâr rûh bûd wa Sanâï du chashm-û, mâ az piay Sanâï wa Attâr âmedaim," Lives, p. 698.

§ On the strength of the following verse, the Sufis claim Firdousî as one of their body: "Jehân râ bulandî wa pastî tuî, nadânam chiî har che hasti tuî."

different from the vague mysticism of the Sufî school. For certain poetic minds, mysticism has immense charms. But for intellects cast in the mould of stern Reason, it is too dreamy ever to become a favourite doctrine. Hence the aversion of Abû Ali Ibn Sînâ (Avicenna), and of Khâja Nasîr-ud-dîn of Tûs,—the greatest Moslem astronomer of the 13th century—to Sufîism.

The Sufîs base the practice of morality entirely on Love, and abhor the idea of fear as the origin of duties. One of them, on being asked, who were bad, answered, 'Those who serve God out of fear of "punishment or hope of reward.' 'From what motive 'then do you serve God?' asked the interrogator. 'Out of Love to Him,' said the Sufî, basing his reply on the mystic tradition handed down from Mohammed, that God divided Love into a hundred parts, ninety-nine of which He reserved for Himself, and allotted one to mankind; and that all the love which exists in the world is due to that one part; that through that alone human beings love each other; and that man is nearest to God when his soul is wrapt in the devotions of Universal Love.*

The pure, we may say the exalted side of this beautiful Idealism, entirely founded on the teachings of Mohammed, has furnished glorious themes to the poets of Islâm. The idylls of that Universal Divine

* Rouzat-ur-Rihâhîn; Lives of the Sufîs.

Love, which pervades Nature from the lowest type of Creation to the Highest, sung in sweet strains and rapturous words by Jelâl-ud-dîn, Sanâï and Attâr are regarded by the Sufîs with a veneration only less than that entertained for the Koran; and sometimes with an equal feeling of respect.

Sufîism in the Mohammedan world,—like its counterpart in Christendom,—has, in its practical operation, however, been productive of many mischievous results. In perfectly well-attuned minds, mysticism takes the form of a noble type of idealistic philosophy; but the generality of mankind are more likely to unhinge their brains by busying themselves with the mysteries of the Divine Essence, and our relation to it. Every ignorant and idle specimen of humanity who, despising real knowledge, abandoned the fields of true philosophy, and betook himself to the domains of mysticism, would thus set himself up as one of the *Ahl-i-màrfat*, "people of knowledge."* And that this actually occurred in the time of Gazzâlî, we see by his bitter complaint, that things had come to such a pass that husbandmen were leaving their tillage and claiming the privileges of "the advanced." In fact, the greatest objection to vulgar mysticism, whether in Islâm or in Christendom, is that, being in itself no religion, wherever it prevails it unsettles the mind and weakens the

* Compare Lives of the Sufis, Eng. Introd. pp. 17, 18.

foundations of morality ;* indeed, it brings about a state of things which is every day visible in the naturalistic pantheism of India.

Yet the benefits, conferred by the nobler type of Idealistic philosophy, are too great to be ignored; and the Idealism of Abû Ali Ibn Sînâ (Avicenna) and Abû Rushd (Averroes) has done more to develope in Europe the conception of Universal Divinity than all the dreamy lucubrations of succeeding thinkers. Christian Europe owes its outburst of subjective pantheism, and its consequent emancipation from the intense materialism of the Church teachings, from the bondage of degrading superstitions—to the engrafting of Moslem mysticism, Moslem idealism, on the European mind.† Western Christianity, we may say Christianity apart from the Platonism with which it was pregnant during the first five centuries, is of the most material character. It does not recognise a God apart from human conceptions; its deity is intensely anthropomorphic and personal. "The "pantheistic writings which flowed from the school "of Averroes, reviving the old stoical notions of a

* Compare Malcolm, History of Persia, vol. ii. chap. xx. p. 287; also Gobineau, Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale, pp. 70, 71. For a summary of the Sufi doctrines, consult "Prolegomènes d'Ibn-Khaldoun," translated into French by M. de Slane, Pt. iii. p. 90, et seq.

† The Christian mystic and saint Bonaventura, was a pupil of the Moslem idealistic school. Comp. Sedillot, Hist. des Arabes, p. 380.

"soul of nature,* directed attention to the great "problem of the connection between the worlds of "matter and of mind The conception of an all- "pervading spirit 'which sleeps in the stone, dreams "in the animal, and wakes in the man,' the belief "that the hidden vital principle which produces the "varied form of organisation is but the thrill of "the Divine Essence that is present in them all,"†— this belief reappeared in Christianity as a faint echo of the deep mysticism which pervades Islâm.

NOTE I. TO CHAPTER XVII.

The multitude of authentic traditions which have come down so us from Mohammed and Ali, regarding the sacred character of learning and learned men, prove the value they attached to intellectual attainments. All these traditions are preserved faithfully in Bukhârî (Al-Kastalânî's commented ed. vol. i. p. 166); in Jamai-Tirmizi (a careful and critical collection of the traditional sayings of Mohammed) p. 436; in the Kitâb-ul-Mustatrif (an invaluable work on Moslem practical philosophy) chap. iv.; in the Mishkât, &c. The chapter in the Mustatrif is unquestionably the most comprehensive. A tradition reported in the Tarîkh-ul-Hukamâ, "History of the Philosophers" (translated into Persian from the Arabic of Shams-ud-Dîn

* The Persian poet says:—"Jân âlam go-em-ash gar rabt jân dânam ba-tan, dar dil-i-har zarra ham pinhân wa-ham paidâstî," "I would have said He was the Soul of the Universe (if I had known the relation of the human soul to the body), for He is present and hidden in the bosom of every atom," Abul-Kâsim Kindaraskî, (Âtesh-Kedah, p. 208).

† Lecky, Hist. of Rationalism, vol. i. p. 374.

Mohammed-al-Suharwardî, in the reign of Akbar the Great), throws an extraordinary light on the meaning, which Mohammed, most probably, attached to the word "prophet," and his extreme veneration for learning. Amr ibn-al-Âs having returned from Egypt, the Prophet asked him to recount the extraordinary things he had seen there. Amr answered that one of the things which struck him most was the sight of a multitude of men flocking into a place where they read the books of some one whom they called Aristotle. Mohammed replied that he had heard Aristotle was a prophet, and added, *mâ wallâh âlamô bis-sawâb*,—"but God knows best." According to another tradition, reported on the authority of Muâdz-ibn-Jabal, Mohammed declares, "Instruct in knowledge, because he who instructs "fears God; who speaks of it praises the Lord; who disputes about "it engages in holy warfare; who seeks it, adores God; who "spreads it, dispenses alms to the ignorant; and who possesses it "attains the veneration and good-will of all. Knowledge enables its "possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; it "lights the way to heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society "in solitude; our companion when far away from our homes; it "guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it raises us in the "estimation of friends; it serves as an armour against our enemies. "With knowledge the servant of God rises to the heights of good-"ness, and to a noble position; associates with sovereigns in this "world; and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next. The "study of knowledge and letters is equal to fasting; its conversation, "teaching and instruction are equal to prayers, &c.;" (Kitâb-ul-Mustatrif, chap. iv. quoted also with a slight variation by the author of the *Kashf-uz-Zunûn*, Hâji Khalifa, Fleugel's ed. p. 44). Nothing can be more eloquent and spirited than this beautiful eulogium on learning. No wonder that the followers of this noble-hearted son of the desert, as long as they observed the spirit of his teachings, were the masters of the intellectual world. Comp. also the Hadîses in the Mishkât.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE political character of Islâm has been a subject of gross misrepresentation by the followers of the rival creeds. Politically Islâm conferred more benefits on mankind in the few years which its Founder spent at Medîna, than centuries of vague theorizing by the followers of the Portico or the Academy, or by the hangers-on in the anterooms of the Jurisconsults of Rome. It gave a code to the people and a constitution to the State, enforced by the sanctions of religion. It limited taxation; it made men equal in the eye of the law; it consecrated the principles of self-government. It established a control over the sovereign power by rendering the executive authority subordinate to the law,—a law based upon religious sanctions and moral obligations. "The excellence and effectiveness of each of "these principles," says Urquhart, "(each capable "of immortalizing its founder) gave value to the "rest; and all combined endowed the system which "they formed, with a force and energy exceeding "those of any other political system. Within the "lifetime of a man, though in the hands of a popu-

"lation wild, ignorant, and insignificant, it spread "over a greater extent than the dominions of Rome. "While it retained its primitive character it was "irresistible."*

A change came immediately over every country which the Moslems entered. Cities sprang into existence; order took the place of anarchy.

The short government of Abû Bakr was too fully occupied with the labours of pacifying the tribes of the desert to afford time for the regulation of provinces, which the hostility of the Byzantines threw into Moslem hands. But with the reign of Omar commenced that sleepless care for the welfare of the subject nations, which characterised the government of the early Caliphs. The battle of Kadessia, which threw Persia into the hands of the Moslems, was the signal of deliverance for the down-trodden subjects of the Chosroes. The Jew, whom the Mago-Zoroastrians massacred from time to time; the Christians, whom they deported and exiled, "breathed "freely," says M. Gobineau, "under the authority "of a Prophet who declared them true believers, "though incomplete, and exacted a nominal impost "in consideration of exemption from military "duties."† The peasantry and petty landowners trampled under foot by an insolent oligarchy, and regarded with contempt by the priesthood, hailed

* Urquhart, "the Spirit of the East," vol. i. Introd. p. xxviii.

† Gobineau, p. 56.

the Moslems as the forerunners of their salvation. So with other countries. Nations, which till then had slumbered wrapt in the apathy of wretchedness, woke into new life and new energy, under the auspices of the Prophet of Arabia. The people everywhere received the Moslems as their liberators. Wherever any resistance was offered, it was by the priesthood and the aristocracy.

An examination of the condition of the Moslems under the first four Caliphs, brings to view a popular government based on a definite code, and administered by elective chiefs with limited powers.* The chiefs of the State were controlled by public opinion, and were open to the censures of their meanest subjects. Othmân was obliged to render every day an account of the public money; and Ali appeared before the ordinary tribunals of justice as accuser of a Christian thief. The decisions of the judges were supreme; and the early Caliphs could not assume the power (as later usurpers did) of pardoning those whom the regular tribunals had condemned. The law was the same for the poor as for the rich; for the man in power as for the labourer in the field.†

The importance which Islâm attaches to the duties of sovereigns toward their subjects, and the manner

* Oelsner, p. 90.

† Comp. the account of Jabala's interview with Omar, Abulfedâ, (Reiske's Ed.) vol. i. p. 239; Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii. pp. 506-511.

in which it promotes the freedom and equality of the people, and protects them against the encroachment of their rulers, is shown in the erudite work of the celebrated publicist, Imâm Fakhr-ud-Dîn Râzî (of Raghes, Rai), on the Reciprocal Rights of Sovereigns and Subjects, written barely more than a hundred years after the time of the Prophet.*

The laws of the Moslems based on equitable principles and remarkable for their simplicity and precision, did not demand an obedience either difficult to render or incompatible with the intelligence of mankind. "And if," says M. Oelsner, "the law which "regulates the right of succession be regarded as "the most important institution for the internal "peace and welfare of society, to the Moslems must "be conceded the honour of possessing a code sur-"passing in this respect all ancient legislation."†

Those countries where the Moslems established themselves remained exempt from the disastrous consequences of the feudal system and the feudal code. Admitting no privilege, no caste,—their legislation produced two grand results—that of freeing the soil from factitious burdens imposed by barbarian

* This work is generally known as "the Kitâb-i-Târîkh-ud-Dawal," Chronological Hist. of Dynasties; but its proper title is—"*Kitâb-ul-Fakhrî fi-l-âdâb-ul-Saltanîyat wa dawal ul Islâmiya*," "the book of Fakhrî concerning the Conduct of Sovereigns and the Mohammedan Dynasties."

† Oelsner, p. 103.

laws; and of assuring to individuals perfect equality of rights.

"A happy mixture of simplicity and energy, of "disinterestedness and good faith, of modesty and "bravery, of piety, and of love for universal hu- "manity, made the charm," says M. Oelsner, "of "the manners of the early Moslems." The sobriety of life imposed by the precepts of the Prophet, preserved the general mass of Moslems from those wild outbursts which disgraced the lives of the followers of other religions; the sanctity of speech and the respect for law and property formed a safeguard for the world against oppression.

CHAPTER XIX.

Abdullah al-Mâmûn has been deservedly styled the Augustus of the Arabs. Abulfarâj thus speaks of him:—"He was not ignorant that they are the "elect of God, his best and most useful servants, "whose lives are devoted to the improvement of "their rational faculties; . . . . that the teachers of "wisdom are the true luminaries and legislators of "the world."

Mâmûn was followed by a brilliant succession of princes who made it a matter of pride to continue the splendid works commenced by him. Under Mâmûn and his successors, the principal and distinctive characteristic of the school of Bagdad was a true and strongly marked scientific spirit, which presided over all its achievements, and animated all classes of society. The deductive method, hitherto proudly regarded as the invention and sole monopoly of modern Europe, was perfectly understood by the Moslems. "Marching from the known to the "unknown, the school of Bagdad rendered to itself

" an exact account of the phenomena for the purpose " of rising from the effect to the cause; accepting " only what had been demonstrated by experience; " such were the principles taught by the (Moslem) " masters." "The Arabs in the 9th century," continues the author we are quoting, "were in " the possession of that fecund method which was " to become long afterwards, in the hands of the " moderns, the instrument of their most beautiful " discoveries."*

Volumes would be required to enumerate the host of scientific men and men of learning, who flourished about this epoch, all of whom have left in some way or other their mark in the history of progress. We can simply sketch here the discoveries and achievements of the Moslems in the field of intellect. In astronomy, the discoveries of the sons of Mûsâ ben Shâkir, who flourished under Hârûn and Mâmûn, especially with reference to the evaluations of the mean movement of the sun and astral bodies, approach in exactness the latest discoveries of Europe. These men determined with a wonderful precision, considering the appliances they possessed, the obliquity of the ecliptic, and marked for the first time the variations in the lunar latitudes. The Greeks had never apprehended the application of pure mathematics to the measurement of surfaces. The

* Sédillot, Hist. des Arabes, p. 344.

Moslems, under the Caliph Mutazid, first applied algebra to geometry.* They observed and determined with remarkable accuracy the precession of the equinoxes, the movements of the solar apogee (which were utterly unknown to the Greeks) and the eccentricity of the ecliptic, &c. By the time Albatanî† appeared, the Moslems had evolved from the crude astronomy of the ancients, a regular and harmonious science. Albatanî has been regarded by Bailly as the astronomer alone worthy of the name among the Moslems. But Batanî only gave a form and character to the discoveries of his predecessors. He is, however, best known in the history of mathematics as the introducer of the sine and co-sine instead of the chord in astronomical and trigonometrical calculations.

The love of learning which characterised the Abbassides and the Fatimides, was handed down to the dynasties which succeeded them. The Samanides in Transoxiana (Mâ-war-un-Nahr);‡ the Buyides (Âl-Buwaih) in Persia, and at Bagdad in the capacity of mayors of the palace; the Ghaznavides at Ghazni,

* Abu-l-Hassan Sâba ben Kurrah of Hurrân, was the first person who invented this science. He died in 288 A.H. See Mâkhaz-i-Ulûm, p. 62.

† Mohammed ben Jâber al Bâtanî. Comp. throughout the masterly sketch by Draper, of the intellectual grandeur of the early Moslems. Hist. of Intell. Development of Europe, vol. ii. pp. 26-51.

‡ Lit. "The land on the other side of the river," *i. e.* Oxus.

vied with each other in the cultivation of learning and patronage of the learned. The Seljukides—Tughral, Alp Arslân, Sanjar and Malek Shâh—were not only remarkable for their grandeur, their clear comprehension of what constituted the welfare of the people, but were equally distinguished for intellectual gifts and unbounded enthusiasm in the cause of learning.

The hordes of the devastator Chengîz, swept like overwhelming torrents over Moslem Asia. Wherever they went, they left misery and desolation. But the moment the wild barbarians adopted the religion of the Prophet of Arabia, a change came over them. From the destroyers of the seats of learning and arts they were transformed into the founders of academies, and the protectors of the learned. Sultân Khodâ-Bendâh (Uljaitu Khân), the sixth in descent from Chengîz was remarkable for his attainments and patronage of the sciences. Even Hulâku, the grandson of Chengîz, and the destroyer of Bagdad, protected the astronomer-philosopher, Khâja Nasîr-ud-dîn of Tûs.

Under the Buyides flourished Abu-l-wafâ, who introduced the use of the secant and the tangent in trigonometry. "But this was not all," says M. Sédillot, "struck by the imperfection of the "lunar theory of Ptolemy, he verified the ancient "observations, and discovered, independently of "*the equation of the centre and the evection*, a third

" inequality, which is no other than the variation " determined six centuries later by Tycho Brahé."*

Under Mahmûd, the celebrated conqueror of India, and his successors, flourished the philosopher, mathematician, and geographer al-Beyrûnî (Abû Raihân)—Firdousi, the prince of poets—Dukikî, Unsurî and Sanâï. The intercourse which had about this time sprung up between India and the Moslem Empire of Ghaznî, enabled the Moslems to amalgamate with their discoveries the hitherto jealously-hoarded knowledge of the Hindus.

Under the Seljukide dynasty, especially under Malek Shâh and Sanjar flourished some of the mightiest intellects of Islâm. The astronomical observations executed under Malek Shâh led, in 1079-1080, to a reform in the calendar, which preceded by six centuries the Gregorian reform in the west.† The astronomer-poet, Omar Khyâm, whose work has been lately translated both into French and English, and the beautiful singer, Anwarî, flourished under Sanjar.

Under the Moslem successors of Chengîz, the light of knowledge irradiated all parts of the Eastern world, penetrating even to China. The astronomical

* Sédillot, Hist. des Arabes, p. 350.

† It is said that the reformed Persian year gave a variation of two days in ten thousand years, whilst by the Gregorian intercalation, the error rises to three days.

tables of Ibn Yunis* were translated in 1280 by the Chinese; and thus what is attributed to the ancient civilization of China, is only a borrowed light from the Moslems.

It was, however, not only astronomy which the Moslems cultivated and improved. Every branch of higher mathematics bears traces of their genius. The Greeks are said to have invented algebra; but among them, as M. Oelsner has ably remarked, it was confined to furnishing amusement "for the plays of the goblet."† The Moslems applied it to higher and nobler purposes; and thus gave it a value hitherto unknown. Under Mâmûn, they discovered the solution of equations of the second degree; and very soon after, they developed the theory of quadratic equations.

The cultivation of the physical sciences was no less diligently pursued by the Moslems. Chemistry, Botany, Geology, Rural Economy, the Science of Agriculture and Natural History, exercised the powers and intellect of the greatest men. But the Moslems certainly deserve the gratitude of the modern world, for having introduced the method of *experimentation* into the domains of the exact sciences in place of the theorizing of the Greeks.

Chemistry as a science is the undisputed invention of the Moslems. Abû Mûsâ Jâfar of Kufa (the

* See Draper, vol. ii. p. 47. † Oelsner, p. 205.

Geber of Christian writers) is the true father of Moslem Chemistry. "His name is memorable in chem-"istry, since it marks an epoch in that science of "equal importance to that of Priestley and La-"voisier."*

In the knowledge of anatomy and pharmacy, the Moslems left all their predecessors far behind; and developed those branches of learning into positive sciences. Botany, they advanced far beyond the state in which it had been left by Dioscorides; and enriched the herbalogy of the Greeks by the addition of two thousand plants. Regular gardens existed both in Cordova and Bagdad, at Cairo and Fez, for the education of pupils, where discourses were delivered by the most learned in the science.

Aldemrî is famous in the Moslem world for his history of animals,—a work which forestalled Buffon by seven hundred years.

Geology, which has been claimed as a European science, was cultivated under the name of *Ilm-i-Tashrîh-ul-Ardh*, the science of the anatomy of the earth.

But of all the sciences cultivated by the Arabs and the Moslems, agriculture was the one in which they made the greatest progress. "No civilized nation "of their times," says an Enropean writer, "pos-"sessed a code of husbandry more judicious or more

* Draper, vol. i. p. 398.

"perfect."* In metallurgy, no nation of the world has surpassed the Moslems. The blades of Toledo, Damascus and Granada have been scarcely matched by the best productions of the modern world. Numismatics was not unknown; and the work of Makrizî serves as a model to the scholars of all ages.†

The superiority of the Moslems in architecture requires no comment. Their development of the science of political economy is too well-known to need more than a bare mention. But their backwardness in two of the greatest of the fine arts, sculpture and painting, has furnished Christian writers with a subject for a great display of rhetoric. This backwardness has been charged to the prohibition of images by the Koranic laws,—a prohibition similar in nature to the Levitical commandment. This charge is made without due knowledge of the significance of the prohibitive law, or of the circumstances which induced its promulgation. Probably to the first Moslems, pre-eminent Iconoclasts, painting and statuary were odious as leading to idolatry. That this view was not contrary to fact is made

* Crichton, vol. ii. p. 118. See also the abstract of the Kitâb-uz-Zirâet (Book upon Agriculture) by Abû Zakariâ, given in the *Kashf-uz-Zunûn*.

† De Sacy has translated into French two of Makrizî's principal works: one, "The History of Arabian Money," and the other, "A Treatise on the Legal Weights and Measures."

evident by history. Their scruples indeed saved them from the fate of other races and religionists who drank to the dregs the cups of polytheism and fetish-worship, and marked out for them a distinguished place in the universe. But the moment the Moslems secured themselves from the attacks of faithless enemies, the moment they applied themselves to the cultivation of the arts of peace, they became aware of the historic significance of this prohibitory law. They perceived at once that it was special in its application, and was directed only against the making of *similitudes* or images for worship. Hence throughout the Mohammedan world, a taste for painting and sculpture arose simultaneously with the progress of literature and arts. The palaces of the Caliphs, both of the East and of the West, the mansions of the princes who followed in their footsteps, and the houses of the grandees, were invariably decorated with pictures and sculptures. We read in the Tales of the Thousand and One Nights, (the Arabian Nights, those faithful representatives of Moslem life and manners under the Abbassides)—that Hârûn-ar-Rashîd had fitted up special picture galleries in his palace. Mâmûn and his successors, the princes of the house of Buwaih, the Sefâvian sovereigns of Persia, were all remarkable for their love of paintings. Islâm does not interfere with the progress of the fine arts. Certainly, in the decoration of mosques, no figure of animated beings is allowed to enter.

The achievements of the Moslems in the field of general literature were as glorious as those in any other department of knowledge. In rhetoric, in philology, in poetry, in history, in romance, many of the grandest monuments of human intellect exist in the languages of the Moslems, and especially in that of the Arabs.

No nation—not even the Greeks—excelled the Arabs in eloquence or in rhetoric, the laws of which they formulated with the precision of a Quintilian.*

The division and jealousy of the tribes, which had prevented the assimilation and fusion of their several dialects, had nevertheless conduced to the enrichment of the national language, as spoken in Hijâz. The annual conflux of people at Okadh, with the periodical contests of the poets, imparted to it a regularity and polish. But it was the Koran—"a book, by the "aid of which the Arabs conquered a world greater "than that of Alexander the Great, greater than "that of Rome, and in as many tens of years as the "latter had wanted hundreds to accomplish her con-"quests; by the aid of which they, alone of all the "Shemites, came to Europe as kings, whither the "Phœnicians had come as tradesmen, and the Jews "as fugitives or captives; came to Europe to hold "up, together with these fugitives, the light to

* The two greatest works in the Arabic language on this subject are (1) The Talkhîs-ul-Miftâh of Kazwînî, with its *Sharh* (commentary) by Moulânâ Sâd-ud-dîn Taftasânî; and (2) The Hadâyck-ul-Balâghat of Moulânâ Shams-ud-dîn.

" Humanity;—they alone, while darkness lay around, " to raise up the wisdom and knowledge of Hellas " from the dead, to teach philosophy, medicine, as- " tronomy, and the golden art of song to the West " as to the East, to stand at the cradle of modern " science, and to cause us late epigoni for ever to " weep over the day when Granada fell,"*—it was this book which fixed and preserved the Arabic language on a systematic foundation. Remarkable for the simple grandeur of its diction, the chaste elegance of its style, the variety of its imageries, the rapid transitions like flashes of lightning, which show the moralist teaching,—the philosopher theosophizing,—the injured patriot denouncing in fervid expressions the immorality and degradation of his people,—and withal the God of the Universe proclaiming through the man, the fundamental truths which govern the moral world. Such is the Koran. And the awe and veneration with which the greatest poets of the day listened to its teachings,† show how

* These are not the words of a Mohammedan,—these are the words of one of the greatest scholars of the West. Deutsch on Islam, *Quarterly Review*, No. 254, p. 344.

† Mohammed converted Lebid, (one of those grand poets whose poems received the honour of being suspended in the Kaaba), by the style of the Koran. Lebid had suspended one of his most beautiful poems in the Kaaba; the next morning he found a portion of the second chapter of the Koran suspended by the side of his piece. The moment he read it, he exclaimed, none but a God or an inspired man could utter those words; and immediately came to Mohammed and adopted Islâm.

deeply it must have moved the people. Possessing little homogeneity, delivered at different times—in moments of persecution and anguish—or of energetic action,—or delivered for purposes of practical guidance,—there is yet a vitality, an earnestness and energy in the Koran, which show that the Prophet spoke with an inspired tongue.* It has been the fashion of late, at least in the Western world, to deride the merits of the Koran, and to place it as a literary achievement below the tritest Greek or Latin work. Lest it should be thought that our opinion is actuated by prejudice, we quote the words of Mr. Deutsch. "Those grand accents of joy and sorrow, "of love, and valour, and passion, of which but "faint echoes strike on our ears now, were full-"toned at the time of Mohammed; and he had not "merely to rival the illustrious of the illustrious, "but to excel them; to appeal to the superiority "of what he said and sang as a very sign and "proof of his mission. . . . . The poets before "him had sung of love. . . . . Antara, himself "the hero of the most famous novel, sings of

* Well might Mohammed have said of himself, in the words of the Persian poet:

"Dar pas-i-âina tûtî sifatam dashta-and,
Har che Ustâd-i-Azal guft bagû mî-gû-em."

"They have placed me behind the scene (lit. behind the mirror, like a parrot), whatever the Eternal Teacher uttered, I gave utterance to the same."

"the ruin, around which ever hover lovers' "thoughts, of the dwelling of Abla, who is gone, "and her dwelling-place knows her not; it is now "desolate snd silent. Amr al Kais, 'the standard-"bearer of poets, but on the way to hell,' as "Mohammed called him, of all things praises his "fortune with women, chiefly Oneisa, and in bril-"liant, often Heinesque, verse sings of the good "things of this world; until his father banishes "him on account of an adventure wherein he, as "usual, had been too happy. And of a sudden, in "the midst of a wild revel, he hears that his father "had been slain, and not a word said he. But "higher and louder waxed the revel, and he drank "deep, and gamed till the grey dawn;* when he "arose of a sudden and swore a holy oath that "neither wine nor wom n should soothe his senses "until he had taken bloody vengeance for his "father. . . . . They sang of valour and gene-"rosity, of love and strife and revenge, of their "noble tribe and ancestors, of beautiful women, ". . . . of the valiant sword, and the swift camel, ". . . . or of early graves upon which weeps the "morning's clouds, and the fleeting nature of life, "which comes and goes as the waves of the desert "sand, and as the tents of a caravan, as a flower "that shoots up and dies away—while the white

* The Arabs before Mohammed's time were passionately fond of gambling.

"stars will rise and set everlastingly, and the "mountains will rear their heads heavenwards, and "never grow old. . . . . Mohammed sang none "of these. No love-minstrelsy his, not the joys of "this world, nor sword nor camel, not jealousy or "human vengeance, not the glories of tribe or "ancestors, nor the unmeaning, swiftly and forever-"extinguished existence of man, were his themes. "He preached *Islam*. And he preached it by rend-"ing the skies above and tearing open the ground "below, by adjuring heaven and hell, the living "and the dead."*

In Poetry, the Moslem genius has not been surpassed, as regards fertility of intellect, by that of any other nation in the world. In every branch of poetry, lyric, didactic, elegaic, idyllic or epic, the Moslem poets may be numbered by hosts.

The drama is said to have been neglected by the Moslems. But the reason of this apparent neglect is not difficult to find, and has been already grasped by several European writers. The Arabs and the Persians who undertook dramatic compositions never considered it necessary that the work should be written entirely in verse.† Descriptions, similitudes, reflections, and many of the speeches they expressed in numbers, but the narrative part was,

* Deutsch on Islâm, Quarterly Review, No. 254.

† I do not speak here of the elegaic poems written for the dramatization of the tragical scenes enacted on the plains of Kerbela.

with greater perception of the exactness of circumstances, written in prose. Many of the tales of the "Thousand and One Nights" are composed in this mixed manner.*

In History, the Moslems have given to the world the most splendid proofs of their genius. The bibliographical encyclopædia of Hâji Khalîfa (the Kashf-uz-zunûn) bears a glorious testimony to the fecundity of the Moslem mind. But in one department of the science of history, the Moslems, or more properly the Arabs, might justly lay claim to the merit of originality. The science of historic evidence, unknown or at least unappreciated in Europe till the middle of the last century, was perfectly known to the Moslems. The mass of conflicting traditions with which they had to deal, regarding the life and history of their great Master, early gave rise to the science of sifting the credibility of historical documents.†

Such were the glorious achievements of the Moslems in the field of intellect; and all arose directly from the teachings of one persecuted man, flying from the sanguinary attacks of remorseless enemies.‡ Called

* Comp. Carlyle's Specimens of Arabic Poetry, Pref. p. 6.

† The greatest writer on this subject is the jurist, Abû Ali Hussain Karâbisî of Bagdad; Ibn-Khallikân. In Arabic, the science of historic evidence is called, "Ilm-i-jarh-wa't-tâdîl" (science of elimination and classification).

‡ Comp. M. de Slane's Introd. to his Translation of Ibn-Khallikân, p. 6.

by his voice, from the abyss of barbarism and ignorance in which they had hitherto dwelt, with little hope of the present, with none of the future—they went out into the world, not to slaughter like the Israelites of old, but to teach and elevate, to civilise and refine. Afflicted and down-trodden humanity awoke to new life. Whilst the barbarians of Europe, who had overturned an effete empire, were groping in the darkness of absolute ignorance and brutality,* the Moslems were occupied in the task of civilisation. During centuries of moral and intellectual desolation in Christian Europe, Islâm led the vanguard of intellectual progress. In an Indian story† we read of a land enshrouded in darkness, to which the demons of the air bar all access. It is not a fanciful land. Christianity had established itself on the throne of the Cæsars, but it had utterly failed in the object of regenerating the nations of the earth. From the fourth century of the Christian era to the twelfth century, the darkness of Europe grew deeper and deeper. During these ages of ignorance Ecclesiasticism barred every access through which the light of knowledge, represented latterly by Moslem civilisation, could stream in. But though jealously shut out from this land of fanaticism, the benignant influences of Islâm in time made them-

* Comp. Draper, Hist. of the Intellectual Development of Europe, vol. ii. p. 26.

† The Fasâne-ajâyeb.

selves felt in every part. From the court of the Norman princes of Sicily; from that of the great Frederick II; from sunny Andalusia; from the dark palaces of the Isaurian sovereigns of Constantinople,* Islâm spoke to the benighted inhabitants of Europe. The wars of the Guelfs and Ghibelines; the contests of the Iconoclasts of Byzantium with orthodoxy, partially represented the grand battle of Rationalism with Patristicism, of Moslem Civilisation with Barbarism, of Islâm with Ecclesiasticism. From the schools of Salerno, of Bagdad, of Damascus, of Granada, of Cordova, of Malaga, the Moslems taught the world the gentle instructions of philosophy and the practical teachings of stern science. Popes came to their universities to listen to the sweet accents of Learning.

The first outburst of Rationalism in the West, occurred in the province most amenable to the power of Moslem civilisation. Ecclesiasticism crushed this fair flower with fire and with sword, and threw back the progress of the world for centuries. But the principles of the Liberty of Thought, so strongly impressed on Islâm, had communicated their vitality to Christian Europe. Abelard, the impulsive lover of Heloise, had felt the power of the genius of Averroes, which was shedding its light over the whole of the Western world. Abelard struck a blow

* For the Islâmic proclivities of the Isaurian sovereigns, comp. Draper, Hist of the Intell. Development of Europe, vol. i. p. 409.

for Freethought, which his successors were not loth to follow up. Avenpace and Averroes were the precursors of Descartes, Hobbes and Locke.*

The influence of Abelard and of his school soon made itself felt in England. Wickliffe's originality of thought and freedom of spirit took their rise from the bold conceptions of the former thinkers. The later German reformers, deriving their notions on one side from the iconoclastic advocates of Constantinople, and on the other side from the movements of the Albigenses,—the Wickliffites, and even from the Guelfs,—pre-eminently represented the Islâmic ideas only in a Teutonic garb. Luther, in whom, as Hallam justly thinks, there existed a vein of insanity,† tried to repudiate all obligation to Islâm, by using harsh epithets with regard to Mohammed, in his translation of the Koran. But can any one doubt that he was influenced by it? Melancthon and the other German reformers were all deeply read in Mohammed's teachings.

To come again to the point whence we started: while Christian Europe had placed learning under the ban of persecution; while the Vicar of Christ set the example of stifling the infant lispings of Freethought; while the priests led the way in consigning to the flames myriads of inoffensive beings for mere

* To those who may doubt the accuracy of my statement, I commend the words of M. Gobineau, p. 26.

† Hallam, Constitutional History of England, chap. ii. p. 56, note.

aberration of reason or simple differences of opinion regarding the nature of some bread and wine; while Christian Europe was exorcising demons and apotheosizing and worshipping rags and bones, learning flourished under the Moslem sovereigns,—and was held in honour and veneration as never of old. The Vicegerents of Mohammed allied themselves to the cause of civilisation, and assisted in the growth of Freethought and Free-enquiry—originated and consecrated by the Prophet himself.* Persecution for the sake of faith was unknown; and whatever the political conduct of the sovereigns, the world has never had superior examples, in their impartiality and absolute toleration of all creeds and religions. The cultivation of the physical sciences,—that great index to the intellectual liberty of a nation,—formed the day-dream of the whole life of the Moslems.

Three great evils have befallen the human race; three great disasters, which have materially retarded

* Comp. Gobineau, p. 26. Two of the most famous traditional sayings of Mohammed are worthy of being emblazoned in letters of gold, and adopted as the motto of the world of intellect: "The ink of the "scholar," he would repeatedly impress upon his followers, "is more "sacred than the blood of the martyr." Once while dilating upon the sanctity of Reason, he said: "It is related that God created "Reason, and it was the most beautiful being in His Creation,—and "God said to it, 'I have not created anything better or more perfect "or more beautiful than thou, blessings will come down on mankind "on thy account, and they will be judged according to the use they "make of thee.'" The Kitâb-ul-Mustatrif, chap. ii.; also given in the Mishkât, Bk. xxii. chap. 18, pt. 3, (from Abû Hurairah).

the progress of the world, and put back the Hour Hand of Time for centuries. The first is the failure of the Persians in Greece; the second is the unsuccessful siege of Constantinople by the Saracens under Muslemah in the eighth century; and the third is the unfortunate result of the battle of Tours between the Moslems under Abdur Rahmân Fehrî, and the wild hordes of Charles, duke of Aquitane, surnamed by the Christians, Martel. Each of these events has prevented either the growth or progress of civilisation. If the Persians had succeeded in bringing Greece within the circle of their dominion, the influence of the Hellenic genius would have been far greater, and would have extended over a wider area than was possible under the factious jealousies of petty states, many of them smaller than the smallest municipality in India or England. The Persians under the Kyanian (Achæmenian) sovereigns carried on their war with a far-seeing policy. They always allowed the states which became subject to them to retain a certain degree of independence and autonomy. The principle on which they proceeded arose not from a desire of rapine and conquest, but rather from a well-devised policy of federation.* Had Persia succeeded in amalgamating Greece with herself, the result only partially attained by the Hellenic up-

* Comp. throughout Draper, Hist. of the Intellectual Development in Europe, vol. i. pp. 125, 127.

heaval under Alexander, the son of Philip of Macedonia, would have been attained centuries earlier.*

So the two failures of the Moslems, one before Constantinople, and the other in France, retarded the progress of the world for ages. Had the Arabs been less remiss at Tours, had they succeeded in driving before them the barbarian hosts of a barbarian chief, whom the ecclesiastics themselves afterwards condemned to everlasting perdition, the history of the darkest period in the annals of the world would never have been written. The Renaissance, Civilisation, the growth of intellectual liberty would have been accelerated by seven hundred years. We should not have had to shudder over the massacre of the Albigenses, which a Pope instigated; nor of the Huguenots, for which a Pope returned thanks. We should not have had to mourn over the fate of a Bruno or of a Servetus, murdered by the hands of those who had revolted from their mother-church. The history of the *autos-da-fe*, of the murders of the Inquisition, of the massacres of the poor Aztecs and Incas; the tale of the Thirty Years' War, with its manifold miseries,—all this would have remained

* In justice to the Greeks we must admit that their greatest men were well aware of this. Pausanias and Themistocles have been handed down to posterity as traitors, but really they were the best friends of Greece. Had they succeeded in joining Greece and Persia, Europe and Asia would not have been so divided. Comp. Grote, vol. vi. p. 134.

untold. Above all Spain, at one time the favoured haunt of learning and arts, would not have become the intellectual desert it now is, bereft of the glories of centuries. Who has not mourned over the fate of that glorious race, which the mad bigotry of a despot of the Escurial exiled from the country of its adoption, which it had made famous among nations? Justly has it been said, "In an ill-omened "hour the cross supplanted the crescent on the "towers of Granada." The shades of the glorious dead, of Averroes and Avenpace, of Valadeta and Ayesha,* sit weeping by the ruined haunts of their people—haunts silent now to the voice of minstrelsy, of chivalry, of learning, and of art,—only echoing at times the mad outcries of religious combatants, at times the fierce sounds of political animosities. Christianity drove the descendants of these Moslem Andalusians into the desert, sucked out every element of vitality from beautiful Spain, and made it a synonym for intellectual and moral desolation.

If Muslemah had succeeded in capturing Constantinople,—the capital of Irene, the warm advocate of orthodoxy and cruel murderess of her own son, the dark deeds which sully the annals of the Isaurians, the Comneni, the Palæologi, the terrible results which attended the seizure of Byzantium by the Latins, above all, the frightful outburst of the unholy

* Two princesses of the Ommiade house of Cordova.

wars in which Christian Europe tried to strangle the nations of Asia, would probably never have come to pass. But one thing is certain, that if Constantinople had fallen into the hands of the Moslems, the iconoclastic movement would not have proved altogether abortive; and the reformation of the Christian Church would have been accomplished centuries earlier. To use an oft-repeated expression, Providence willed otherwise. The wave of Freethought which had reached the Isaurian emperors from the Islâmic regions, broke upon the rocks of ignorance, superstition, and bigotry; its power was not felt, until the combined action of the schools of Salerno and Cordova,—the influence of Averroes, and perhaps of some Greeks who had imbibed learning at the Saracenic fountain-head—had broken down the rampart of Ecclesiasticism.

Islâm thus introduced into the modern world civilisation, philosophy, the arts and the sciences, everything that ennobles the heart and elevates the mind. It inaugurated the reign of intellectual liberty.

It has been justly remarked, that as long as Islâm retained its pristine character it proved itself the warm protector and promoter of knowledge and civilization,—the zealous ally of Intellectual freedom. The moment extraneous elements attached themselves to it, it lagged behind in the race of progress.

Let us hope that the time is approaching when

Islâm, freed from the blind idolatry of letters and apotheosis of dead men, will regain her true character and, joining hands with the Christianity of the devoted Prophet of Nazareth, will march on together in the work of Civilisation. Islâm and Christianity both aim at the same results,—the elevation of mankind. The gain of the one is the gain of the other. Why, then, should the two be hostile to each other? Why should not the two harmonize? Islâm has done no evil to the world, nor has Christianity. Both have conferred the greatest benefits on mankind. Why then should not the two, mixing the waters of life treasured in their bosom, form the bright flowing river which would bear our race to the most glorious fields of Humanity? Everything that elevates the heart of man is true; everything that leads to goodness and purity in action and in thought is true. Why not then henceforth adopt the words of the Prophet of Arabia, as the motto of Humanity:—

"Try to excel in good works; when ye shall "return unto God, He will tell you as to that in "which ye have differed."

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